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# Bella

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**RUTH: 'I can't wait to work with James again!'**

## RUTH FACES THE AXE

'Worrying time' during divorce battle

'We thought my sister had a secret new life, **FRED & ROSE WEST MURDERED HER'**

EXCLUSIVE

## 'KATE'S GIVEN UP ON HARRY'

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'Botox is why I look THIS GOOD at 65!'

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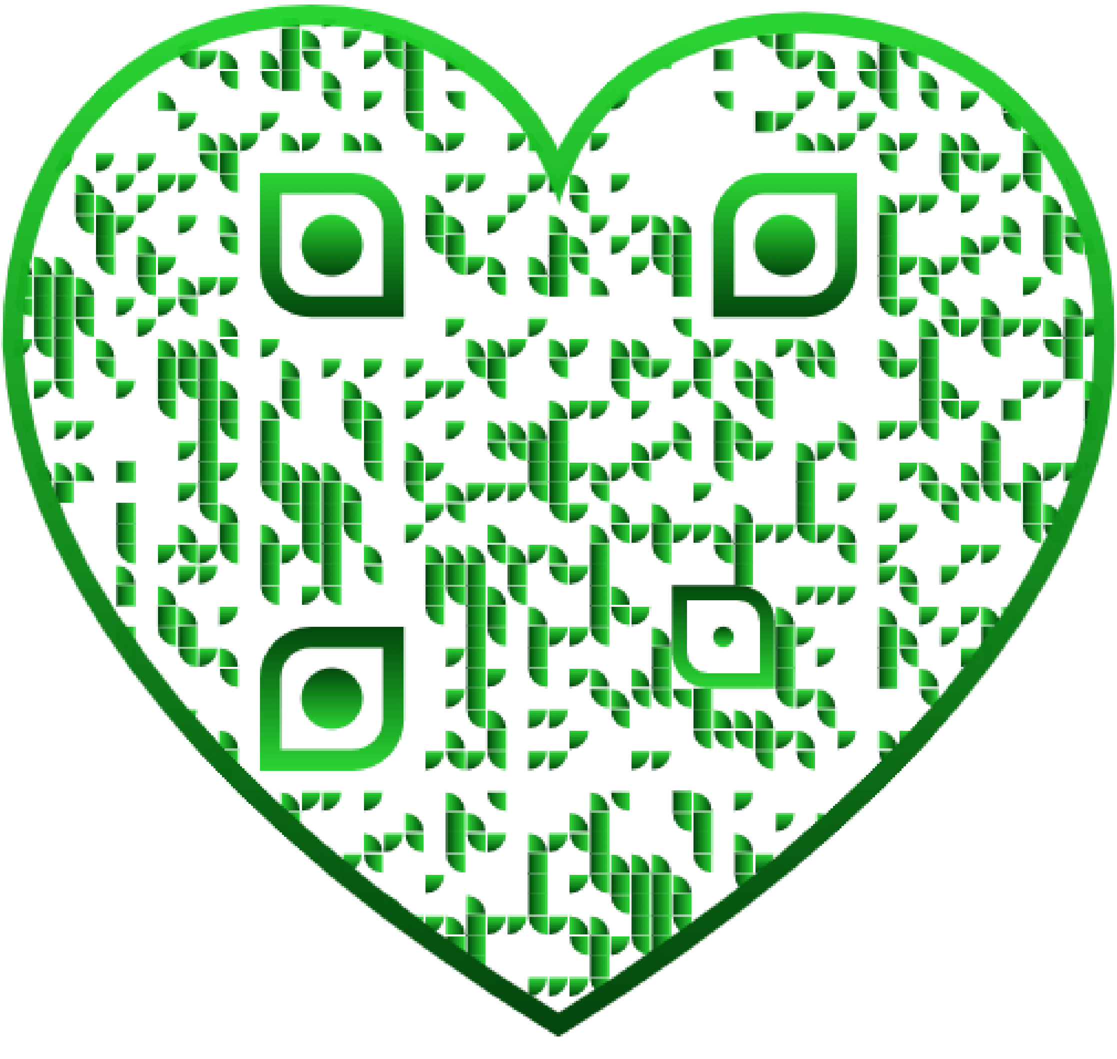

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# this week in bella

TICKET
CALL THE MIDWIFE

## Call The Midwife: The Movie!

### Our fave TV show is getting a big glow up

The country's favourite midwives are heading to the big screen for their next adventure as BBC has announced the show's very first movie spin-off.

The film will see the much-loved characters of the series 'take a short break from Poplar and test themselves in an unfamiliar landscape', creator Heidi Thomas says. She adds, 'The opening of new doors at Nonnatus House feels profoundly emotional, and yet just right.'

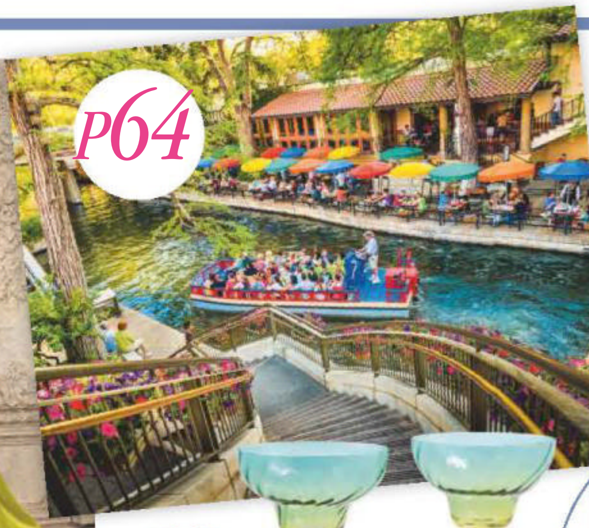
The location of the movie's setting is yet to be announced, but we're promised it will look 'absolutely fantastic' on the big screen.

We're also being treated to a separate prequel series, exploring the pasts of Sister Jenny, nurse Trixie and more of the beloved characters even further.

While Heidi says she has 'never run out of stories', she has found herself 'yearning to delve into the deeper past'.

Set before 1957, where the main series kicked off when it hit screens in 2012, the prequel series will cover the Blitz years in the East End, which were 'filled with loss, togetherness, courage and joy.'

Although we have to wait until next year to see the new adventures, we will be treated to another two-part Christmas special set in Hong Kong this December. We're already excited for it!



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## Celeb news & gossip

6 **COVER STORY Ruth Langsford's dream job faces the axe**
7 **COVER STORY Ruth Jones: 'I can't wait to work with James again'**
8 **COVER STORY Why Kate has 'given up' on Harry**
10 Posh and Nicola: The toxic fallout
12 **COVER STORY Anthea Turner: 'Botox is key to looking this good'**
68 Michaela Strachan: 'The audience love it when we go wrong!'
82 Celeb Chelsea Flower Show fans

## Real life reads

16 **COVER STORY 'My sister was murdered by Fred and Rose West'**
18 **COVER STORY 'My miracle baby after having the menopause at 15'**
32 Mini-mag: 'At 60 I became a super-fit gran'

## Look & feel good

4 Fashion stars of the BAFTA TV Awards
21 Occasionwear from the high street
25 Dynamic accessory pairs
27 **COVER STORY 25-page Look and Feel Younger mini-mag**
28 Mini-mag: Eating for menopause
30 Mini-mag: Creating confidence
34 Mini-mag: Denise Van Outen: 'I'm not panicking about my age!'
36 Mini-mag: Celeb fitness stars
38 Mini-mag: Sinitta chats about her wellness routine at 61
40 Mini-mag: Powerful Pilates
42 Mini-mag: Plump up your face
44 **COVER STORY Mini-mag: Anti-ageing tech tools**
47 Mini-mag: Upgrade your skincare routine
48 Mini-mag: Celeb-approved haircare
50 **COVER STORY Mini-mag: Stress-busting diet plan**

## Lifestyle

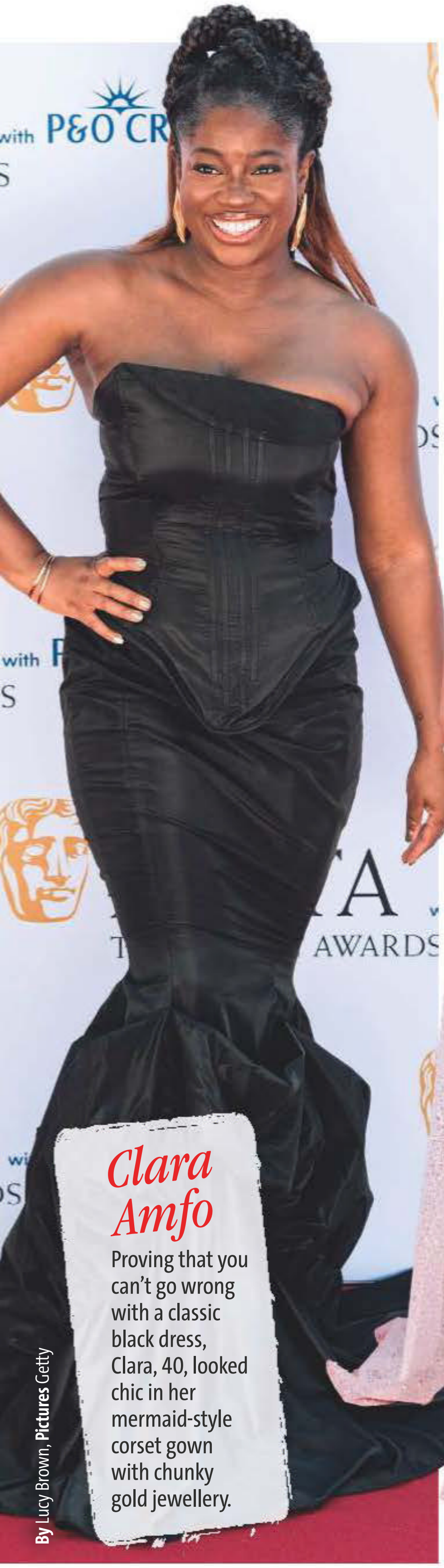
54 **COVER STORY Cookery: Simple healthy eating**
56 Home trends: Holiday vibes
58 Tried & tested: Cabin cases
64 Travel: San Antonio

## Don't miss

15 Bella debate: Should we embrace a cashless society?
62 Kate Medlin offers advice
63 Horoscopes
66 TV picks, films, books and more
70 **COVER STORY Prize puzzles and fun quizzes**

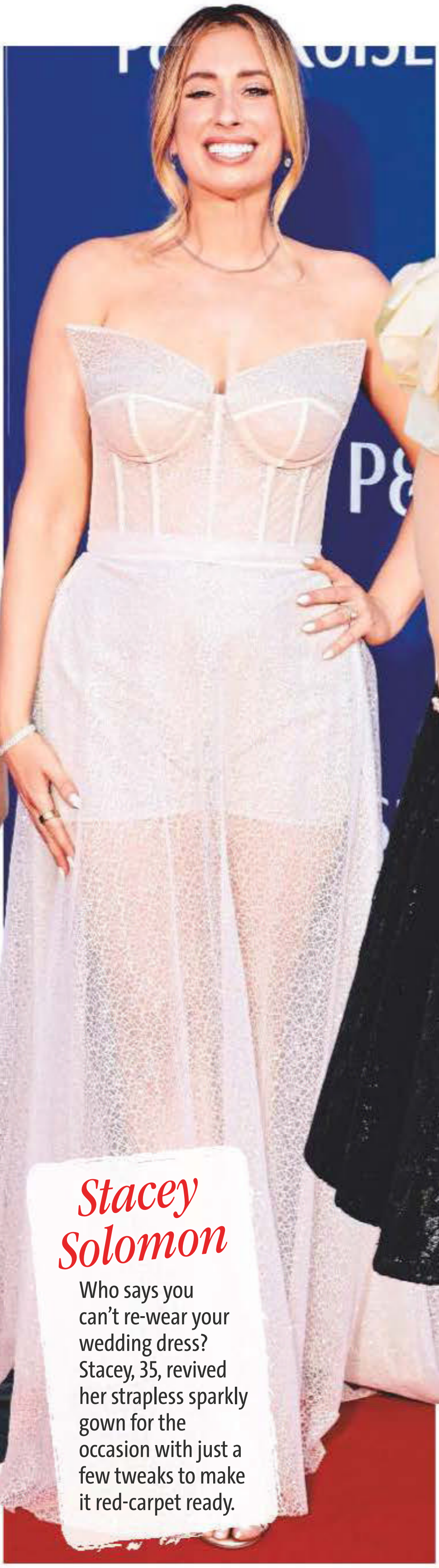
By Samuel McManus, **Pictures** BBC/Nealstreet Productions/Ray Burmiston, BBC/Olly Courtney

# BAFTA TV



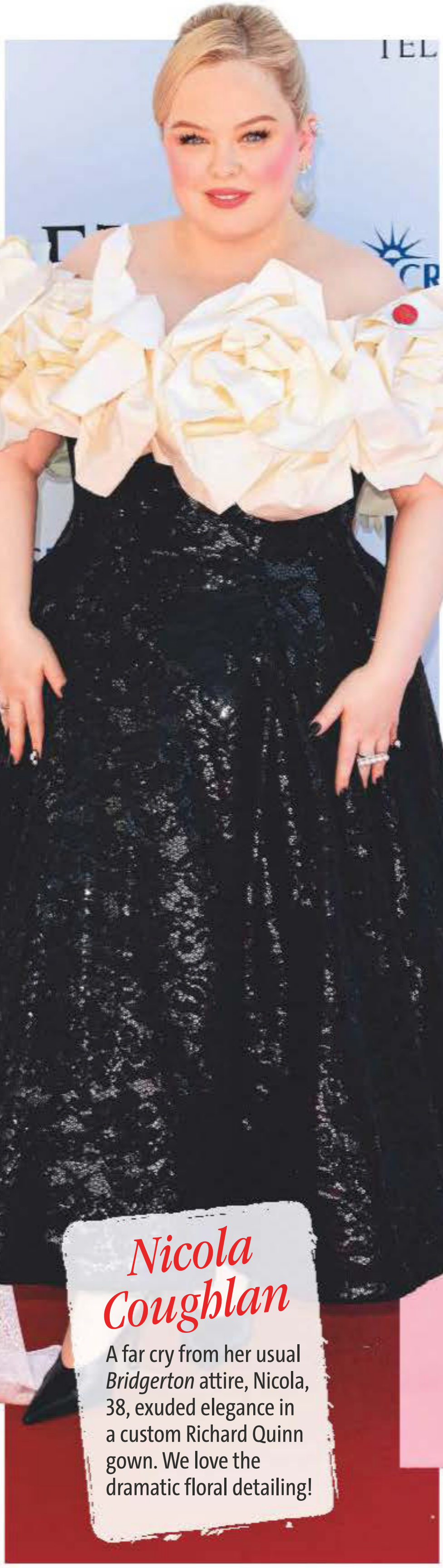
## Clara Amfo

Proving that you can't go wrong with a classic black dress, Clara, 40, looked chic in her mermaid-style corset gown with chunky gold jewellery.



## Stacey Solomon

Who says you can't re-wear your wedding dress? Stacey, 35, revived her strapless sparkly gown for the occasion with just a few tweaks to make it red-carpet ready.



## Nicola Coughlan

A far cry from her usual *Bridgerton* attire, Nicola, 38, exuded elegance in a custom Richard Quinn gown. We love the dramatic floral detailing!

**By** Lucy Brown, **Pictures** Getty

# Awards

## *Telly's biggest stars hit the red carpet...*

**Billie Piper**

The perfect balance of girly and grunge, Billie, 42, wore a pink off-the-shoulder mini dress by Vivienne Westwood, which she styled with black sheer tights and chunky heels.

**Alex Jones**

We loved how Alex, 48, balanced her fun, feathered skirt with a minimalistic white cami – it really was the definition of business on the top and party on the bottom!

**Frankie Bridge**

Dressed in Selezza London, the singer, 36, highlighted her toned abs in a micro crop top with matching skirt and cuffs each adorned with black flower petals.

**Dianne Buswell**

Taking home the prize for most memorable TV moment, Dianne, 36, sparkled in a sequin-adorned midnight blue gown. She even paid homage to her iconic *Strictly* dance by having the earrings she wore sewn into her dress.

## *'We have the same struggles'*

They may be in the monarchy, but Zara Tindall admits that the royal family has the same issues as anyone else. The medal-winning equestrian, who is Princess Anne's daughter, said, 'It is very hard to see from the outside but, 100 per cent, it is a family that is still going through the same struggles other people do. We're still very supportive of each other.' Zara, 43, also revealed her saucy proposition to now-husband Mike, 46, when they first got together in 2003. 'I said, "If you get naked, I will give you a kiss,"' she recalled. 'So he got naked, I gave him a kiss and then… anyway.'

# Ruth to be axed?

## The *Loose Women* star's 'dream job' could soon be over

Ruth Langsford's 'dream job' as a fashion designer could be at risk, with the future of her clothing range said to be up in the air. The *Loose Women* star, 65, currently has her top-selling collection with QVC and hosts a live show each week, but with the US company facing reported difficulties, potential job cuts could be looming – including Ruth's.

'The company keeps considering cuts, and that leaves no exceptions. There have been whispers that even some of the celebrity faces might have to go too, including Ruth Langsford,' an insider revealed. 'They seem to be looking at an overhaul of the way that things are running, including potentially having a shake-up of the faces of the channel. Everything is up in the air for now, so only time will tell what actually happens to everyone's jobs. While the company seems to have hope in the changes, it is a worrying time for the employees.'

As well as being a presenter on the shopping channel with her *Fashion Edit* slot, Ruth – a QVC ambassador – takes pride in designing items in the self-titled range, which launched in February 2017. 'It's my dream job. I can't draw to save my life, but I know what I want and don't want. As a 60-plus woman, I find fashion difficult. You want to look stylish but also need to be comfortable,' she said.

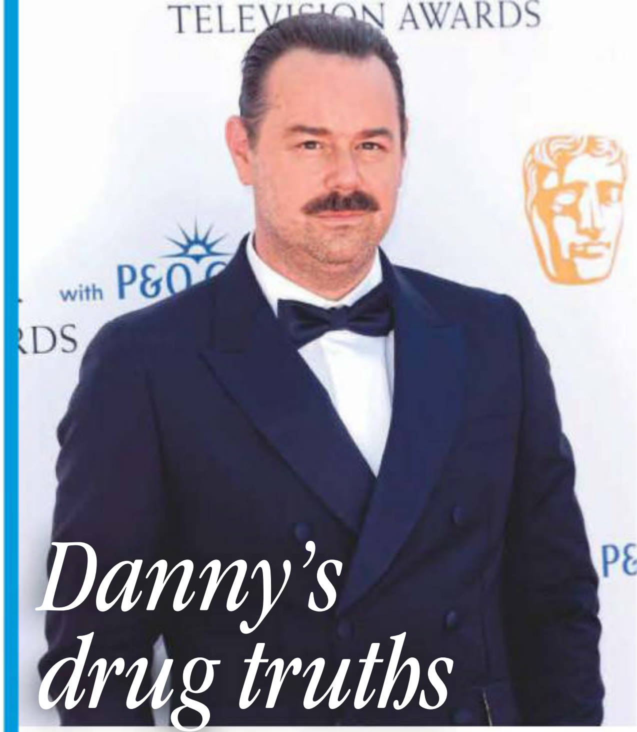
It would be the latest setback for Ruth, who's going through a divorce with ex Eamonn Holmes, 65. She branded 2024 as 'a tough year' with their 'difficult' split.

# DREAM PARTNERSHIP

BAFTA TV Awards winner Ruth Jones said she'll never stop working with James Corden. The pair – who wrote and starred in *Gavin And Stacey* together – were reunited at the ceremony earlier this month, where Ruth paid a moving tribute to her 'dear kind, talented, funny friend'. 'I love you James, I love writing with you, long may it continue,' she said on stage. Ruth, 58, later added, 'I think James and I will carry on working together. We will because we just both sort of like just sitting in a room together. We do a lot of napping but we do write as well when we get going. I just love working with him.'

Ruth scooped the Best Actress gong for her role as Nessa alongside James as Smithy in the beloved sitcom, which concluded with a 'perfect' feature-length episode last Christmas after 17 years. 'Fans don't ask if she's coming back any more because they know that was the finale. No one really wants to see Nessa and Smithy in that domestic set-up, putting the bins out. So I think you'll have to imagine it in your head,' she said. But she revealed that she'll always have a soft spot for the character. 'Nessa's in my heart and soul.'

By Shereen Low, **Pictures:** Shutterstock, Instagram, Getty



# *Danny's drug truths*

***EastEnders* star Danny Dyer has admitted** he was 'off his nut' on prescription drugs during his time on the soap. The 47-year-old actor, who played pub landlord Mick Carter from 2013 until 2022, doesn't have fond memories of his nine-year run. 'I was off my nut for a lot of that job… a lot of Valium and Diazepam. It f***s your nut up. I ended up in rehab twice,' he said. Danny, who won a BAFTA TV Award for his role in *Mr Bigstuff*, also said that *EastEnders* was 'very cliquey', calling out co-stars Jessie Wallace and Shane Richie as unfriendly.

# WEEK IN PICS

## New love

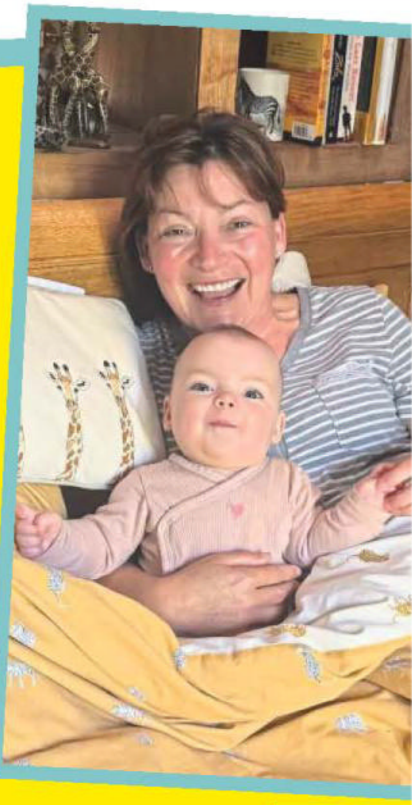
Alan Halsall has gone Insta-official with his new younger girlfriend Ellie Dolan, 25. The *I'm A Celeb* winner and *Corrie* star, 42, shared a photo with Ellie, 17 years his junior, and his 11-year-old daughter Sienna. 'Two favourite ladies,' he said.

## Liz's little miracle

Liz McClarnon has revealed she's pregnant! The Atomic Kitten star, 44, is expecting her first child 'after years of sometimes quite painful IVF and dark times' with husband Peter Cho. 'We feel like we've been given the world,' she said. Congrats!

## Cutest cure

Lorraine Kelly has been enjoying quality time with her granddaughter Billie, eight months, as she recovers from surgery. 'Billie providing the best medicine ever with lots of cuddles for her granny,' she shared. The TV star, 65, had preventative keyhole surgery to remove her fallopian tubes and ovaries earlier this month.



**Exclusive**

# Why Kat
# up' on H

Kate was always fond of Harry

## Despite previously supporting her brother-in-law, the princess no longer wants to be involved in the royal drama

Despite fractious relationships with his brother Prince William and father King Charles in recent years, it had been reported that the one senior member of the royal family Prince Harry had kept in touch with was his sister-in-law, Kate Middleton. But a source tells *Bella* that, following the 40-year-old's latest bombshell interview, this has now changed.

Harry gave an interview to BBC News after losing his court battle over the security he receives when he is in the UK, in which he confessed his 76-year-old father 'won't speak to me'.

And although Kate, 43, was always hopeful Harry would reconcile with her husband William, 42, it seems she's finally given up trying to mend fences with Harry and his wife Meghan Markle, also 43.

The insider tells *Bella*, 'Kate was initially keen to try and work through things with Harry but she's now given up on him. Meghan used to be the sticking point, but they feel as if Harry is now even worse.

'The Wales family were hoping that if they didn't respond to Harry's public comments that he would just disappear, but he keeps repeating himself over and over again. They understand that this is a problem that's damaging the family name and brand and are deep in discussions with aides about how best to handle it.'

**'They feel he is even worse'**

Harry has given another interview

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The Waleses and Harry in happier times

However, in the interview Harry – who is dad to son Archie, five, and daughter Lilibet, three – said he hoped to reconcile with his family as he doesn’t know ‘how much longer my father has’, after he was diagnosed with an undisclosed form of cancer in February 2024.

But the source doesn’t think that will happen anytime soon if Harry continues to speak out.

‘The King and William are very aware of the damage that has been caused and are trying to get on with things the best they can to repair it,’ they add. ‘Harry can’t help himself and keeps airing their dirty laundry in public.

‘He’s not realising that it’s not only damaging the royal family but also the Sussex brand and his children’s future and legacy.’

Meanwhile, Kate and William have continued to put on a united front at the recent VE Day events which took place during the same week of Harry’s latest interview.

The Waleses appeared alongside The King and Queen Camilla at the thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey to mark 80 years since victory was declared in Europe, marking the end of the Second World War.

Kate has been throwing herself back into work following her own cancer diagnosis, which she announced in January she was in remission from. The mum-of-three recently shared a short film about spring which she narrated, telling viewers how she had turned to ‘the healing power of nature’ during treatment.

She said, ‘Over the past year, nature has been my sanctuary. The natural world’s capacity to inspire us, to nurture us and help us heal and grow is boundless and has been understood for generations.’

‘It’s now a game to them’

But our source says Kate has had enough of trying to heal relations with Harry – and William now worries his wife could be at the centre of Harry’s next move.

The source says, ‘Harry and Kate’s relationship has gone beyond repair at this point. Nothing is likely to bring them back together unfortunately. It’s now just a game to the Waleses and Sussexes to see who can one up the other.

‘The worry now is that Harry won ’t hold back on Kate as he has no allegiance there any more. William doesn’t like it when his wife becomes a target and that’s what she’s become. He’ll stand by her no matter what and that can sometimes be blindly.’

And although they have seemingly lost their last link to a hope of reconciliation with the senior royals, Harry and Meghan are keeping up appearances by recently enjoying a date night to see Beyoncé perform on her Cowboy Carter tour in Los Angeles.

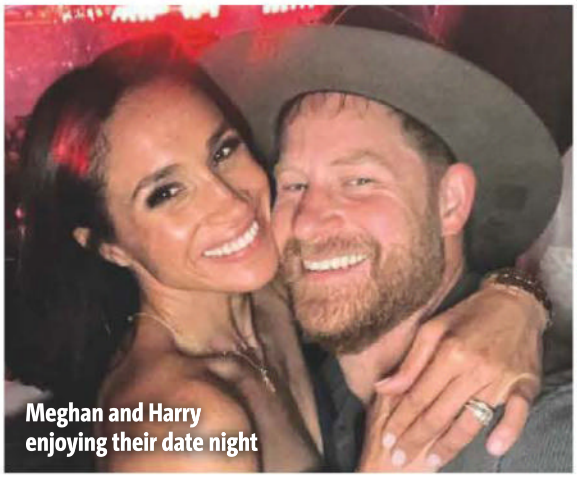
The couple – who will be celebrating their seventh wedding anniversary this month – shared loved-up snaps from the concert, including a sweet clip of Harry planting a kiss on his wife’s cheek.

As with most things the couple do, their show of affection at the concert left royal fans divided, with one asking online, ‘He is worried about security so goes to a public concert?’

A third comment read, ‘Hanging on to any A-list cred they can hoping it’ll rub off by association. Embarrassing.’

However, others were happy to see the couple enjoy a night out after the stressful court case, with one calling Meghan a ‘gorgeous woman living her best life’.

‘What a beautiful couple! They are obviously very much in love and happy. I pray that one day these modern royals will reunite with their family in Britain,’ another wrote.



Meghan and Harry enjoying their date night

Putting on a brave face with William

**By** Samuel McManus, **Pictures** IMAGO/Cover-Images, Max Mumby/Indigo, UK Press via Getty Images, PA Images/Alamy Stock Photo, Instagram

# Posh and Nicola: THE TOXIC FALLOUT

## The inside truth behind the family

The pair have never seemed close

They once seemed like an unbreakable unit – but it's clear the Beckhams are now anything but.

After Brooklyn and Nicola Peltz's snubbing of David Beckham's 50th birthday celebrations earlier this month, rumours have swirled that a rift between them and the rest of the family has deepened substantially. Despite being in London during David's birthday week, Brooklyn and Nicola did not turn up.

Insiders reveal that the simmering tensions appear to lie between matriarch Victoria, 51, and her daughter-in-law Nicola – and it seems it may be down to a simple clash in personalities between a mother and her son's wife. 'Victoria has a killer wit and is very good with put downs. But Nicola isn't funny and isn't good on irony,' the source says, adding that Nicola would make comments about being 'old' which Victoria 'hates'.

> 'She hasn't shown respect'

'Victoria is fairly open among her close friends about what a viper Nicola is and how she feels betrayed by Brooklyn, so the mask has fully dropped,' a source revealed.

'This is a takeover situation, and it is all about the relationship between Victoria Beckham and Nicola. In some ways, Brooklyn has married his mother in Nicola. Nicola is a very strong woman, and she wants to build her own family brand.'

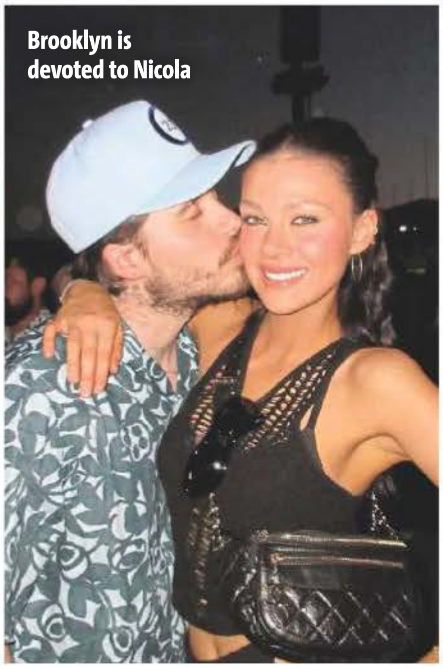
However, it's clear that it's never been a particularly comfortable relationship between the two. During Nicola and Brooklyn's wedding in 2022, the bride's decision to wear a Valentino dress caused friction with the fashion designer. Despite this, they were still close at Vic's 50th birthday last year and even posed for photos together. Nicola has denied reports of a rift in the past, saying, 'It's not a feud! No family is perfect.'

'From the minute Nicola came into the family, she hasn't shown what Victoria would say is respect towards them,' another insider added. 'Tensions rose at Brooklyn and Nicola's wedding and that situation has continued; Victoria and Nicola don't really get along. Over the past few months, Nicola has been causing things to fester and everyone to fall out.'

The alleged family feud, which some say was also sparked over Romeo's new girlfriend Kim Turnbull – who was once thought

Nicola and Brooklyn were absent from David's big birthday

Victoria and David miss Brooklyn



Brooklyn is devoted to Nicola

to have dated Brooklyn – is said to have left both Victoria and David 'heartbroken'. The Beckhams were last seen with Brooklyn, 26, and Nicola, 30, in October for the UK launch of their son's Cloud23 hot sauce but they didn't spend Christmas together. 'We miss you,' David posted on Instagram.

Brooklyn and Nicola didn't join the rest of the family to celebrate David's new campaign with BOSS in January nor Victoria's launch at Paris Fashion Week in March, which they had attended in previous years.

The young couple also skipped Victoria's 51st birthday celebrations in April, while none of the Beckhams liked Brooklyn's post celebrating his and Nicola's third wedding anniversary in April.

Sources reveal that Victoria and David are keen to de-escalate tensions and reconcile with their firstborn, with whom they were once very close. The former England footballer attempted to make amends as he reflected on his milestone birthday, giving shout-outs to sons Brooklyn, Romeo, 22, Cruz, 20, and daughter Harper, 13. 'My biggest accomplishment is and will always be my family… My wife and best friend of 28 years and my beautiful children Brooklyn, Romeo, Cruz and Harper you are the reason I get out of bed each day thank you for making me smile and thank you for making me a better man... I love you all so much and thank you for making today so special for me... You are my world,' David shared.

The Beckhams flew into New York earlier this month, in the hopes of extending an olive branch to Brooklyn and Nicola, amid rumours that their eldest has shown no signs of repairing the relationship.

It's also been revealed that Brooklyn has 'ditched' his former circle of friends including Guy Ritchie and Madonna's son Rocco, Noel Gallagher and Meg Mathews' daughter Anais and Gordon Ramsay's son Jack, for a more 'Hollywood' crowd including movie star Gerard Butler and Nicola's good pal Selena Gomez.

'He will stand by his wife'

An insider said, 'Emotions are running high. Victoria wants peace but her olive branch has fallen on deaf ears and Brooklyn's not communicating with any of them. Vic will stop at nothing now to regain Brooklyn's trust and get him back on side. She will kill with kindness if she has to.

'David's going to reach out to Brooklyn. The dust just needs to settle. He wishes they could turn back the clocks as he was gutted not to have all his children with him for his big birthday.'

The source added, 'But Brooklyn is finding this all too toxic. He has told pals he won't be a part of any family gatherings until they show Nicola the respect she deserves. This is his wife and he will stand by her.'

**By** Shereen Low, **Pictures:** Getty, Instagram

# Anthea: 'Botox is the key to looking THIS GOOD!'

## The legendary TV host talks ageing, beauty secrets and marriage

**With partner Mark**

She turns 65 later this month, but Anthea Turner's barely aged since she made her debut as the host of *Blue Peter* over three decades ago. And the TV presenter – who has been engaged to businessman Mark Armstrong since 2019 – tells *Bella* she's got a few tricks up her sleeve.

'Botox is the key to looking this good!' laughs Anthea, who also has her own skincare range called By Anthea Turner. 'I use all my own skincare products, I try to eat healthily but I'm not a slave to the gym. I don't work out every day. It's like everything in life, it's a collection of factors – your attitude, DNA, the elixir isn't in a pot of cream. There's so much expensive stuff out there with so many promises. How can a cream tighten your chin, don't be ridiculous!'

**With her celebrity girl gang Lizzie Cundy and Vanessa Feltz**

And Anthea – who is good friends with fellow TV presenters Vanessa Feltz, 64 and Kate Garraway, 57 – says there's no better time for women over 50 to thrive in TV careers.

'I've been working more lately than I've ever worked!' smiles Anthea. 'I'm the brand ambassador for Silver Marketing Association and I've just written my third children's book in my *Underneath the Underground* series.

'I love catching up with Vanessa and being a guest of her new morning show. I think we've finally created a tribe in our age group – people who have known us for years like me and Vanessa. It's a wonderful time for over 50s to be in the business. We are scrubbed up and ready to go! We are a massive demographic and the best part is that I don't feel different from the person I was in my 20s.'

## 'I'm really lucky with Mark'

Anthea has spoken openly about the joy she felt becoming a stepmother, when she married Grant Bovey in 2000, to his three daughters Lily, 33, Amelia, 32, and Claudia 29, who were all young children at the time.

Anthea said, 'Being a stepmum for me is one of my favourite roles. I love all three of my stepdaughters and we have a great bond. I wasn't lucky enough to have my own children but I knew I would adore these three little girls who were quite young when they came into

**Anthea turns 65 this month**

*Blue Peter* was a big breakthrough

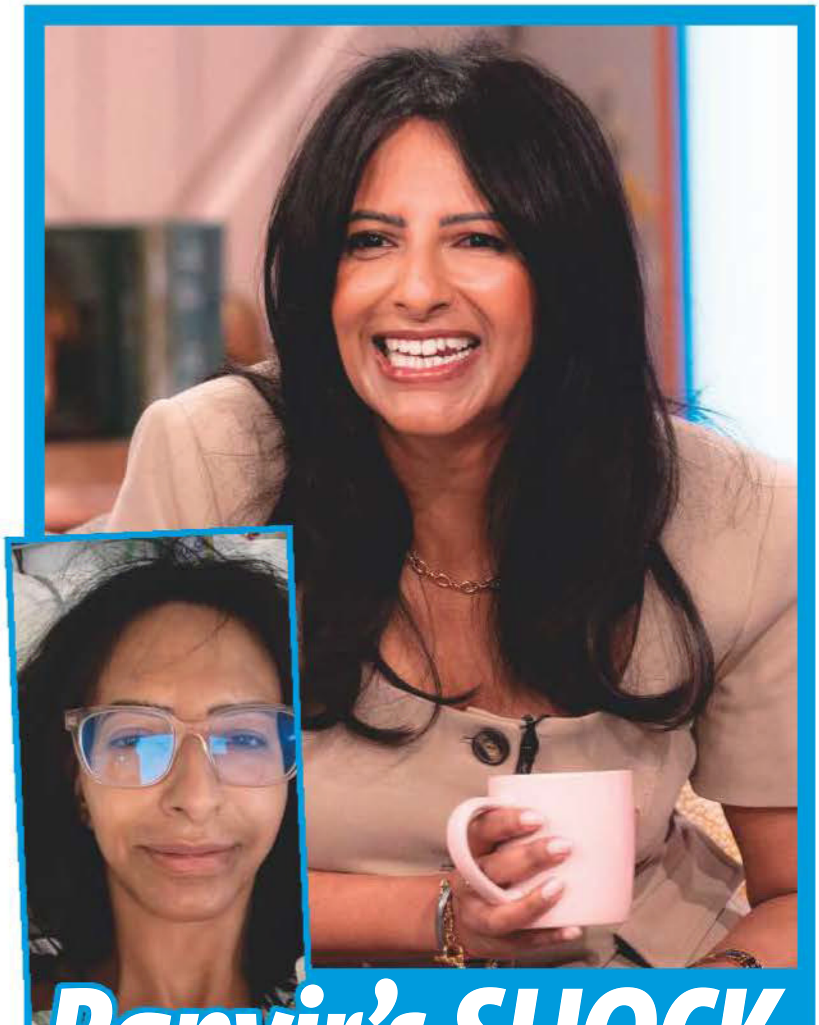
my life. I'm so lucky to have them in my life despite the fact that their dad and I are no longer together.'

And, despite a difficult divorce from Grant in 2012, as a result of his infidelity, Anthea was seen attending Amelia's wedding recently with Mark by her side – and now she admits, she can't wait for her own Big Day.

She laughs, 'We haven't sorted out the wedding – we have to get our act together. I don't want the faff of organising anything abroad so it will be in the UK. God knows how many bridesmaids I'm going to have!'

And she says the key to having a great relationship is to keep things fun with your partner. 'I'm really lucky that Mark is a real romantic. For Easter, he woke me up in the morning and said, "Get ready for an Easter egg hunt around the house," You're never too old for an egg hunt! 'I love stuff like that. It's spontaneous and fun. I feel like a lucky lady!'

● *Bella spoke to Anthea at the launch of Help! My Child's Anxiety is Giving Me Anxiety*



# Ranvir's SHOCK HOSPITAL DASH

Earlier this month, Ranvir Singh's work day took a dramatic turn when her appendix ruptured right after filming a segment on *Lorraine*.

The 47-year-old *Good Morning Britain* presenter, who regularly takes the helm of *Lorraine* when its namesake is absent, experienced stomach pains after filming wrapped but chalked it up to a bug.

However, she soon learned the true reason behind her pain when she was rushed to hospital for emergency surgery the following night. As a result, Ranvir had to miss a Friday taping and was shocked to be told she needed to take the full week off work.

She took to Instagram to tell fans of the ordeal, writing, 'Woke up 5am on Friday morning, high on anaesthetic and certain I could get into work to host the show as normal. Pretty nasty few days, the bacteria had spread and infected my blood etc and told to take this week off... I'm sore and shuffling around, can't drive for a week, and no exercise for 4 weeks (!) so really it's the boredom that will kill me! P. S. Anyone else have this horrendous shoulder pain afterwards? It's mad isn't it!'

Ranvir received an outpouring of support from friends and celebrities alike, including former BBC *Breakfast* host Susanna Reid who wrote, 'Awful – so scary – so glad you are now recovering – loads of love,' and 2024 *Strictly* contestant Dr Punam Krishan who commented, 'Sending lots of love and hope you feel better soon.'

By Katie Banks, Sarah O'Byrne **Pictures** Shutterstock, Instagram

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As new technologies change the way we pay, more companies have announced that they will only be accepting card or digital payments. *So, we ask...*

# Should we embrace a cashless society?

## No

### 'It teaches kids the value of money'

**Lauren Wilden, 32, marketing director**

Cash is important because something can so easily go wrong with technology and then we'd all be in trouble. The day I took my daughter, Millie, to get her ears pierced, there was a global IT outage, where a bug meant loads of places were not accepting card. We were told it was cash only and two of the cash points in the town centre were already out of money. It just goes to show how reliant we are on technology, and one slip-up can affect all of us.

Luckily, I've always carried cash and I use it to teach Millie the value of money. When children are so used to money being invisible, I think it's more important than ever for them to see what things cost and what that amount of money looks like. It teaches them the consequences of spending and the value of saving. It also helps with her maths, as she uses the coins to improve her adding up and subtracting.

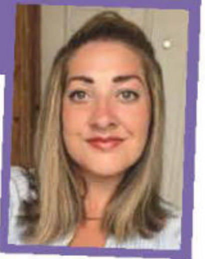
Cash is important for traditions, too, such as pocket money and the tooth fairy. When Millie lost her first tooth she was at her grandparents' house, and my dad Mark had no small change so she ended up getting a £20 note! If, one day, I left a note from the tooth fairy saying, 'I've transferred you two pounds', it just wouldn't be the same. There's nothing more magical for a child than seeing money under the pillow.

*Visit Lauren's parenting page @GrowingOutandUp*

## Yes

### 'Cash is so easily lost or stolen'

**Lauren Probert, 33, journalist**



I stopped carrying cash years ago. One unfortunate accident, which saw me lose £100 after dropping my purse, meant both the cash and the purse had to go. I now keep just my trusty debit card inside the pocket of my handbag.

That's the thing about cash – it's so fragile. If you drop it, lose it or worse – have it stolen – it's gone for good. I hate the idea that my hard-earned money could so easily be taken away from me.

If I lose my card – and I'll admit, as a clumsy person, it does happen from time to time – it's just a few clicks on my phone and I know my cash is safe and secure. I also like being able to keep track of exactly what I'm spending.

And I don't miss the change. How annoying is it to break into a note and be handed back a handful of coins? There's no way I'm going to keep hold of that £1.25 – I'll more than likely lose it!

The only time I use coins is when I'm putting money in a charity box or buying a poppy – and even those vendors have card machines now.

I like the organisation of having my currency digitised. In my opinion, it's convenient, secure and clear, and that's why I would happily embrace a cashless society.

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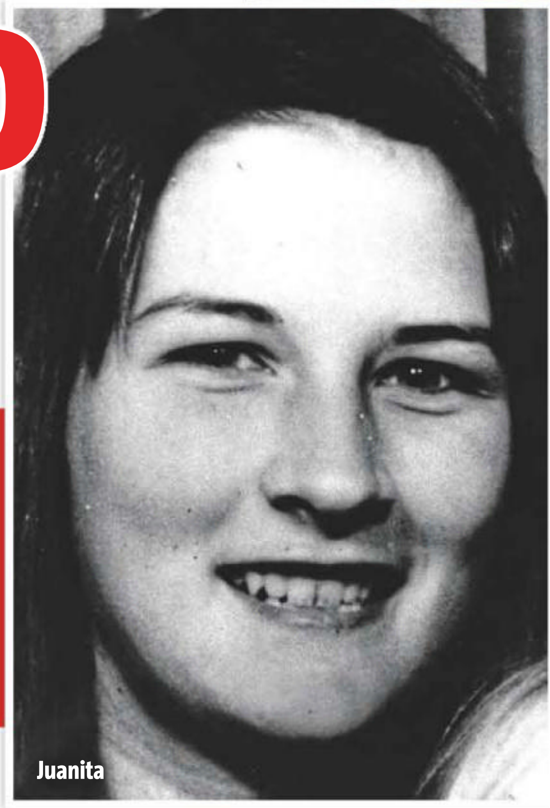
By Paula Costas. **Pictures:** Shutterstock

# ‘My sister went missing – 19 years later we found out she’d been KILLED BY FRED & ROSE WEST’



Juanita

As a new documentary about the infamous serial killers airs on Netflix, Mary-Ann Mitchell, 56, tells *Bella* about the horror her family went through

The house on Cromwell Street

Fred and Rose West

Mary-Ann Mitchell has few precious memories of her half-sister Juanita, who vanished aged 18 in 1975, when Mary-Ann was just six years old. It would be almost 20 years before Mary-Ann and her family would learn the shocking truth about Juanita’s disappearance – she’d fallen prey to two of the UK’s most notorious and sadistic serial killers, Fred and Rose West.

Juanita was the seventh victim to be discovered by police searching the West’s home at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester. Mary-Ann, who lives in Ross-on-Wye with her husband Richard, says, ‘Juanita was very protective of me. Wherever she went, she took me with her and she mothered me. She’d often go off for weeks at a time, sofa surfing with friends, but even when she was off on one of her jaunts, she’d wait at the end of the street where my school was, to make sure I crossed the road safely. She made me promise to

‘She’s not here, she’s not home’

Mary-Ann on the Netflix show

look for cigarettes with as much white on as possible and put them in a jar behind the curtain, where she'd come back for them. I used to pinch cigarettes off our mum for the jar. One day I heard a noise in the wardrobe of the bedroom we all shared and I found Juanita and her friend at the bottom eating Marmite sandwiches. She'd obviously snuck in through the window while Mum was out. 'She said, "Shh, don't say anything!"'

It wasn't long after finding Juanita in the wardrobe that Mary-Ann recalls tumbling down the stairs at home. 'I called for Juanita and she didn't come,' she remembers. 'That was the first time Mum said, "I don't know where she is. She's not here, she's not home." So that's the first memory I have of her being gone. We never thought that she wasn't coming back. It was always, okay, she's been gone a lot longer this time. But then the months turned to years. Mum couldn't talk about her; she felt a bit abandoned. But my sisters and I would talk about her. We always hoped that she'd settled somewhere and that she'd turn up with a tribe of kids and say, "Sorry I've been away for so long." We never forgot her, she was always with us. When I had my daughter, Lauren, who's now 33, I told her all about her auntie.'

Over the years the family made several attempts to track Juanita down, making pleas on a TV show and in a national newspaper. Mary-Ann says, 'We got a few responses but they turned out to be dead ends.' Then, in the spring of 1994, Mary-Ann was at her sister Belinda's when a big story came on the news. Police searching for a local missing teenager called Heather West, who Mary-Ann had gone to school with, had searched the garden and home of Heather's parents – Fred and Rose. Alongside Heather's remains, several more bodies had been found. 'They were saying there were possibly other remains and that if you'd had anybody go missing in your family to let them know,' Mary-Ann recalls. 'Belinda said, "Our Juanita used to stay there." We looked at each other and I just said, "You've got to phone them. You've got to put her name down." We didn't need to say anything else but it felt like a black cloud had come over us. All we could think was, 'Please God, no. This happens on TV. This doesn't happen to us."'

'I wanted to talk about it'

After Belinda contacted the police, investigators requested DNA from their mother, and Juanita and Belinda's father. Tragically, it confirmed that one of the bodies retrieved from the West's cellar belonged to Juanita.

Mary-Ann says, 'We all had different reactions to the confirmation it was Juanita, but Mum crumbled. I held her up, making her eat, drink, wash. Belinda was fielding the press and dealing with all that side of things for us. There was no let up. We had to wait for the funeral because Juanita's remains were evidence. Weirdly I realised when Lauren was a baby I'd lived in a basement flat in Wellington Street, which is the next road to Cromwell Street. While we were looking for Juanita, she was in the very next street, so it was all a bit surreal.'

The details that emerged around the case were sickening. Rose and Fred West's victims – lodgers, hitchhikers and young women simply waiting at local bus stops after nights out – had almost all shown signs of being raped, tortured and dismembered. Less than a year after the discovery of the bodies, on 1 January 1995, Fred West took his own life in his prison cell, while awaiting trial for 12 murders. He was believed to have killed his first wife, Catherine Costello, as well as the nanny to the children from this first marriage, Ann McFall, before meeting Rose.

In November 1995 Rose West was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of 10 women and girls, including her 16-year-old daughter Heather and her eight-year-old step-daughter, Charmaine. She has never admitted her crimes.

'We weren't offered counselling,' says Mary-Ann. 'People who lived on the street when it all kicked off were offered therapy, but we weren't. Not once. That's why I wanted to talk about it, because this documentary is about the families, not the vile creatures that did this. It's not talking about them, it's about us, how myself and my family dealt with it – and are still dealing with it. It's letting us say how the whole process has made us feel. It's kind of therapy.

'Sadly, we lost Mum to cancer, and I can't speak for anyone else, but for me the documentary helped to get a lot of stuff out and to start feeling good about myself again. It's also letting us remember Juanita the way we want to. Not for the nasty things that happened.'

● *Fred and Rose West: A British Horror Story is available to watch on Netflix now.*

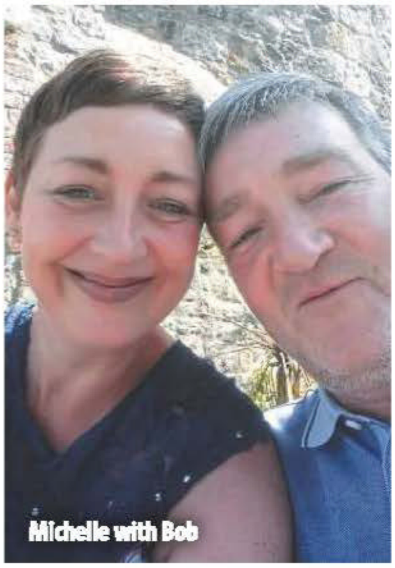
By Deborah Riseley, **Pictures** Netflix, Shutterstock

# ‘I had my miracle bab after going through the menopause at 15

Michelle as a teenager

## When Michelle Sutherland, 49, started trying for a baby in her thirties, she received devastating news…

Halfway through shampooing my next client as a trainee hairdresser, I suddenly didn't feel great. ‘I'm so sorry,’ I said. ‘I'm having one of my funny turns.’ Luckily the customer, Mrs Meldrum, was a regular who came in every week for a shampoo and set. ‘You sound like me,’ she replied when I described my regular attacks of sweating and flushing. ‘And I'm going through the menopause.’ I shook my head. All I knew about the menopause was that it was something that happened to older ladies and I was only 16. I'd been having these episodes for about a year, sweating so much I'd take a spare uniform to school. But after getting permission from my boss, Mrs Meldrum frog-marched me to the doctor's surgery to make an appointment to see what was wrong.



Michelle with Bob

The doctor put my symptoms down to anxiety, although I was also put on the pill to regulate my cycle, which was all over the place. As time went on however, I also started experiencing brain fog, memory problems and mood swings. I had to keep a fan handy and was constantly back and forth to the doctors. ‘Could it be the menopause?’ I asked every time, but I kept being told I was too young. ‘Plus you're still getting your period,’ one GP pointed out. Tests for thyroid issues and diabetes came back normal too. Raised not to question doctors, and feeling like a nuisance, I stopped going back.

At 26 I reconnected with an old school friend, Bob. He was now an electrical fitter at the local dockyard and we got on great. He was kind and understanding of my health problems and within six months I'd come off the pill so we could try for a baby. I knew periods could stop for a while after coming off the pill, but when mine hadn't returned two years on, I went back to my GP. ‘We'll try Clomid,’ he said. ‘It's a drug that helps stimulate ovulation.’ I was excited that things were moving forward at last, but at my next appointment Bob and I got taken to a side room.

‘The results of your hormone tests suggest you're post-menopausal,’ the doctor said. ‘You have no eggs left and your only options are egg donation or adoption.’ I burst into tears as the doctor said he'd be back in touch about next steps.

‘You have no eggs left’

Genetic testing revealed I had balanced translocation, where a section of one chromosome from a particular pair swaps places with a section from a chromosome from another. As a result, my body had stopped producing eggs around the age of 15. It finally explained the symptoms I'd been struggling with since school. I was furious that I'd been dismissed so many times and devastated that at 27 my dream of having my own biological babies had been snatched away.

Because Bob worked away a lot, adoption didn't feel like an option, as we assumed that meant we wouldn't be approved. Instead, we went on the waiting list for an egg donor. In the meantime, too low to work or see friends, I barely left the house and started painting as a release.

Gradually the anger dissipated, but still hopeful of somehow getting pregnant naturally, I was

The day Taylor-Anne was born

too afraid to take HRT which I felt might affect that. Thankfully Bob remained supportive as I struggled on with my symptoms. The waiting list for a donor was two years long and we didn't have any say about who the donor might be, although we were told they'd match my ethnic background.

When we finally reached the top of the list it felt like my life had re-started. An embryo created from Bob's sperm and the donor egg was transferred to my womb, but crushingly, two weeks on, a pregnancy test was negative. We were entitled to three rounds of IVF on the NHS so there was still hope, but as we waited for another egg donor it felt like everyone around me was having babies.

It was another three years before we finally received a call from the clinic about a second try. By now I was 39 and I felt sick with anxiety as I took another pregnancy test, but this time I called out to Bob, 'It's positive!'

As the pregnancy progressed some reacted strangely, saying I must have been lying about going through the menopause! Then I developed pre-eclampsia, dangerously high blood pressure, and was in and out of hospital from 20 weeks. It made it hard to enjoy my pregnancy as I just couldn't wait for our daughter to arrive safely.

Thankfully when Taylor-Anne arrived by C-Section at 34 weeks, in July 2015, everything clicked into place. I'd worried about bonding – what if she looked like a stranger to me? But weirdly she had the same two birthmarks as me, a large freckle on the hump of her thumb and a 'stork bite' on her neck. It blew me away!

A calm baby, Taylor-Anne grew into a smiley, articulate toddler. Aged two she said, 'I waited a long time for you, Mummy. I was waiting for the right time to come to you and Daddy.' It took my breath away. During Lockdown my menopause symptoms worsened and I finally got a referral for HRT, which made a massive difference. Then when Taylor-Anne was eight we told her about the egg donor. At first, she cried and asked, 'Are you definitely my mum and dad?' But we reassured her how loved and wanted she was. She also got excited when we explained that she can trace her egg donor when she's older and that she might have half-siblings. I still know nothing about the woman who helped us achieve our family, although I'm forever grateful.

> 'Everything clicked into place'

Last year, despite the HRT, my symptoms worsened and I was told that although my genetic condition meant I'd stopped producing eggs at 15, I was now going through my 'natural' menopause. I couldn't believe I had to go through menopause a second time!

Now Taylor-Anne is about to turn 10 and Bob and I are considering fostering. Since having Taylor-Anne I've changed careers to run sensory and wellbeing classes for children and young people, including those with autism, at a unit near my home in Fife. I've sold hundreds of my own paintings too which is a boost. I'm in a great place but getting here was a real journey. Now I tell everyone to just trust their gut and push for answers when it comes to health matters.

● *Follow Michelle on Facebook by searching arty.farty.club*

By Lucy Laing and Deborah Riseley

Michelle with Taylor-Anne now

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## *Day at the races*

**Earrings,** Accessorize, £10

**Fascinator,** John Lewis £49.50

Stick to a refined two-shade colour palette to create a striking yet cohesive outfit.

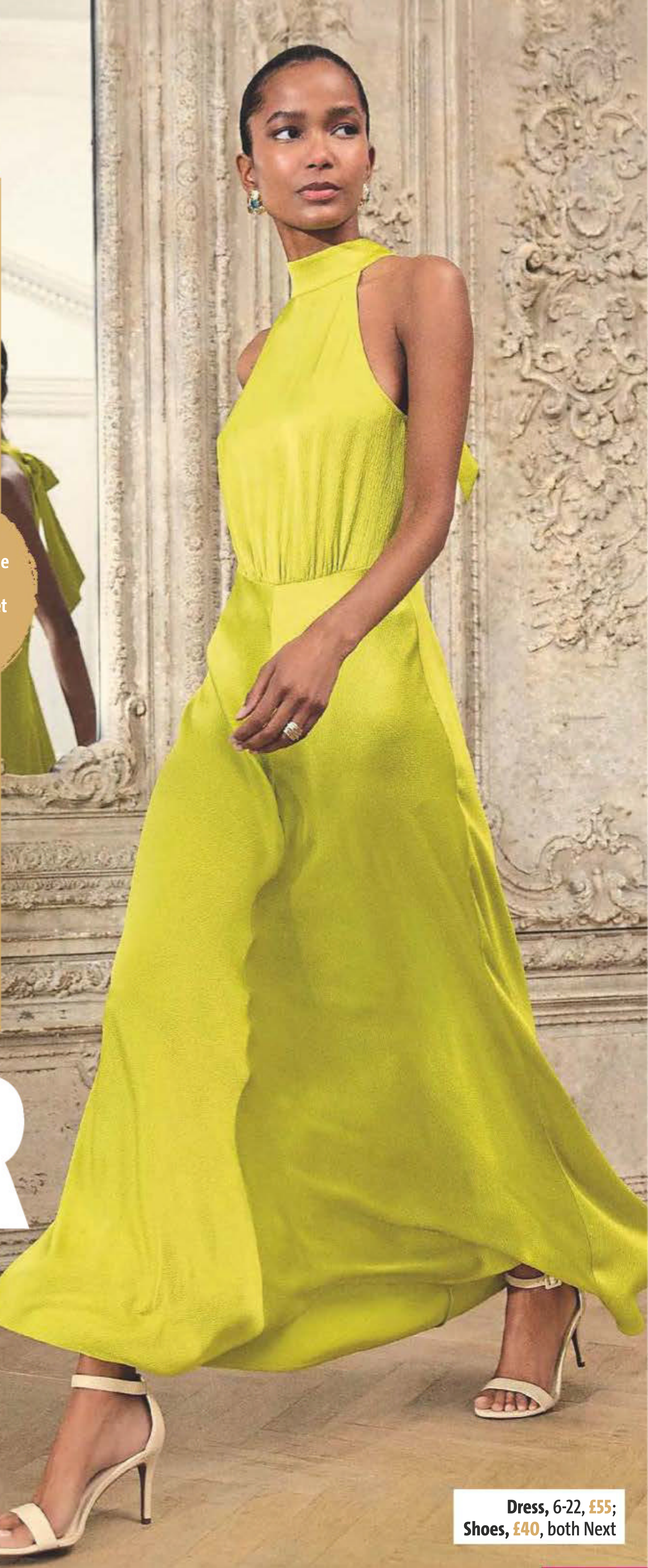
**Dress,** 8-14, Mango, £59.99

**Bag,** Next, £32

**Shoes,** Zara, £35.99

# BE OUR GUEST

RSVP in style with the high street's best occasionwear



**Dress,** 6-22, £55;
**Shoes,** £40, both Next

Continued over the page...

## Hen do

**Top,** 8-22, Little Mistress at Matalan, £24

**Bracelet,** Marks & Spencer, £22.50

**Trousers,** 8-22, Little Mistress at Matalan, £28

**Bag,** Mango, £29.99

**Shoes,** New Look, £27.99

A sleek tailored co-ord is always a winner and can be re-styled with wardrobe basics for endless outfit opportunities!

## Birthday brunch

**Dress,** 6-22, Marks & Spencer, £45

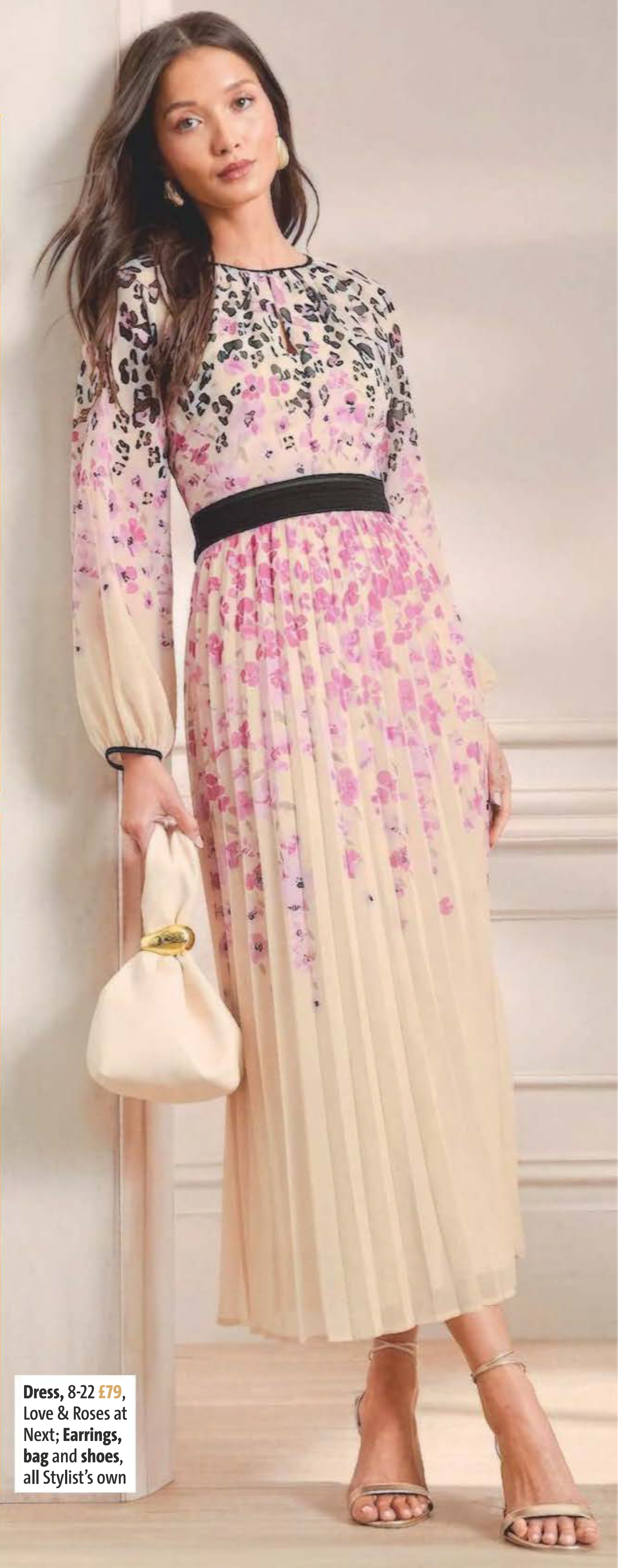
**Jacket,** 8-24, George at ASDA, £28

**Earrings,** Oliver Bonas, £22

**Bag,** Quiz, £24.99

**Shoes,** Primark £12

Give your outfit a high-fashion finish by mix and matching pastel shades.



**Dress,** 8-22 £79, Love & Roses at Next; **Earrings, bag** and **shoes,** all Stylist's own

**Jacket,** 6-20 £119; **Top,** 6-20, £35, **Trousers,** 6-20, £65, all Sosander; **Shoes,** Stylist's own

## Garden party

**Earrings,** Monsoon, £22

**Shirt,** 4-20, Forever New, £70

**Bag,** River Island, £36

**Skirt,** 4-20, Forever New, £70

A floaty, full skirt will create a flattering fit, while wedge sandals add touch of glamour.

**Shoes,** Marks & Spencer, £45

## Wedding reception

**Fascinator,** Phase Eight, £55

**Earrings,** Jon Richard, £18

Soft pastel tones look elegant and expensive and will ensure you don't outshine the bride.

**Bag,** £12, Primark

**Dress,** XS-XXL, H&M, £37.99

**Shoes,** Linzi, £38

By Lauren Goodwin-Gafton

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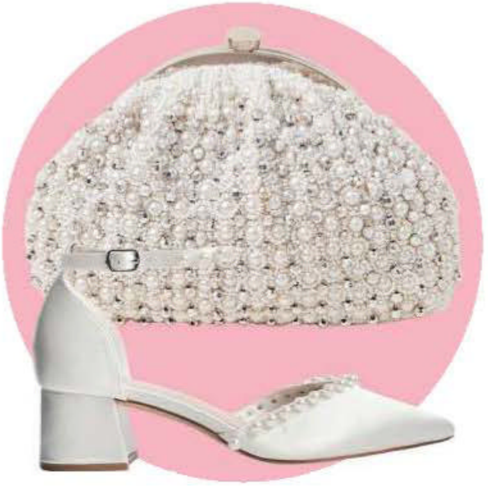
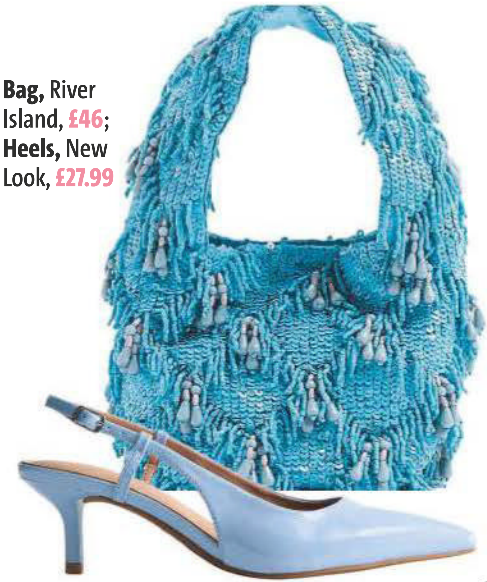
# Dynamic DUO

Complete your outfit with these event-worthy pairings

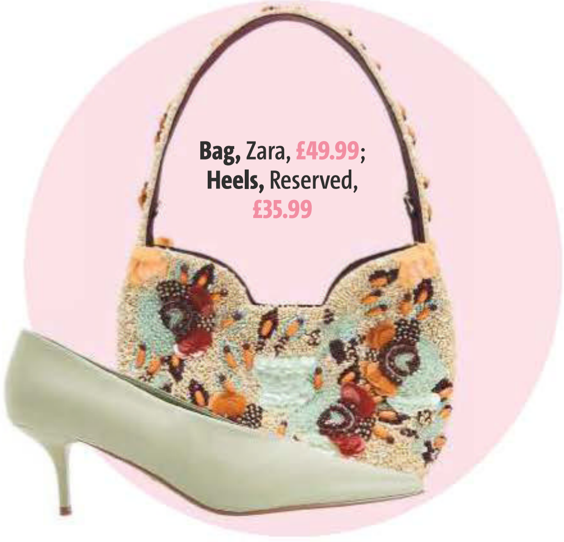
By Ella Shire



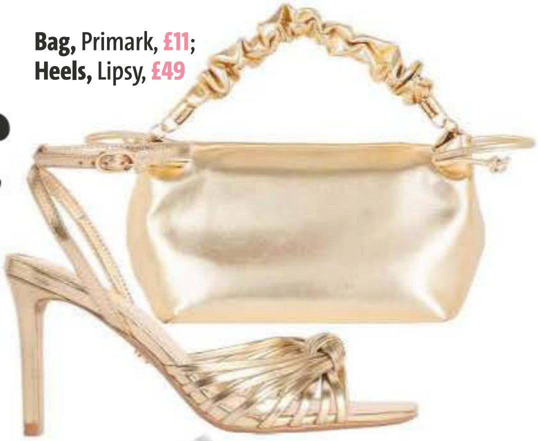
**Bag,** Accessorize, £50; **Heels,** Linzi, £45



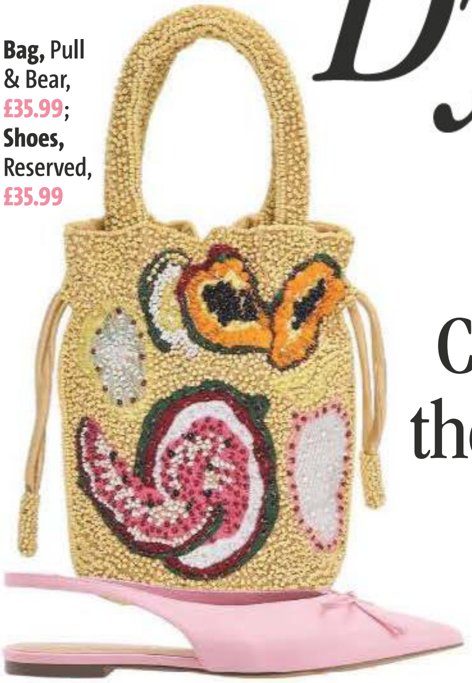
**Bag,** River Island, £46; **Heels,** New Look, £27.99



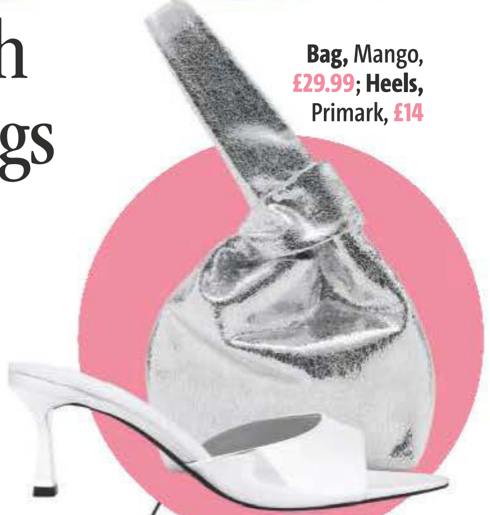
**Bag,** Zara, £49.99; **Heels,** Reserved, £35.99



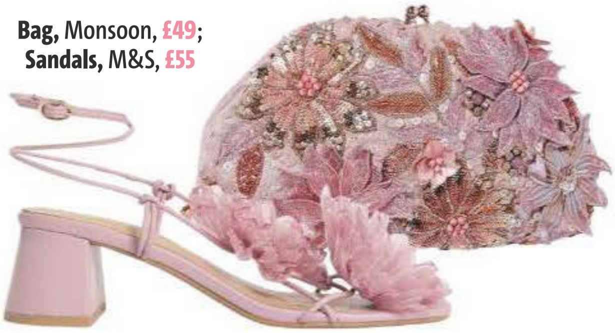
**Bag,** Primark, £11; **Heels,** Lipsy, £49



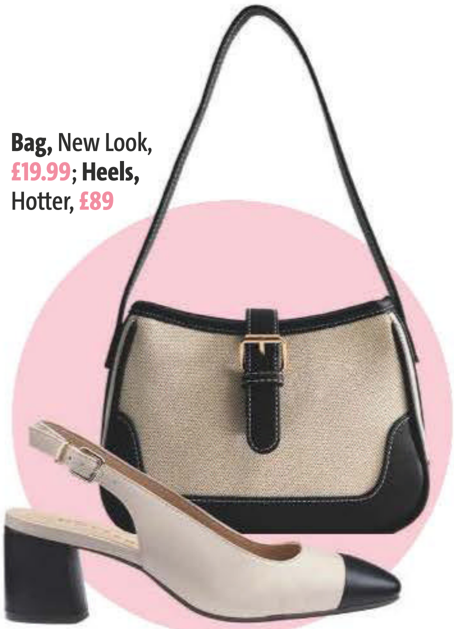
**Bag,** Pull & Bear, £35.99; **Shoes,** Reserved, £35.99



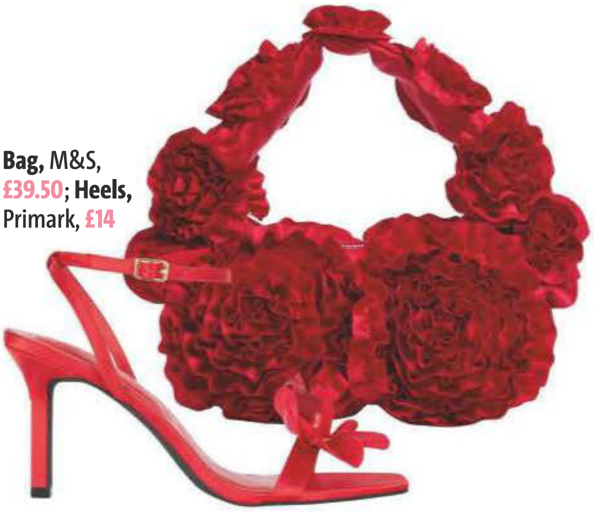
**Bag,** Mango, £29.99; **Heels,** Primark, £14



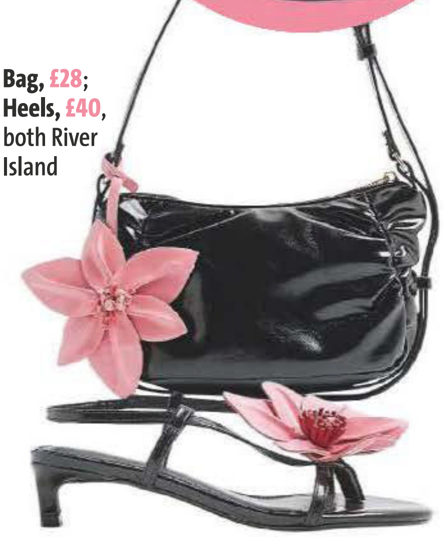
**Bag,** Monsoon, £49; **Sandals,** M&S, £55



**Bag,** New Look, £19.99; **Heels,** Hotter, £89



**Bag,** M&S, £39.50; **Heels,** Primark, £14



**Bag,** £28; **Heels,** £40, both River Island

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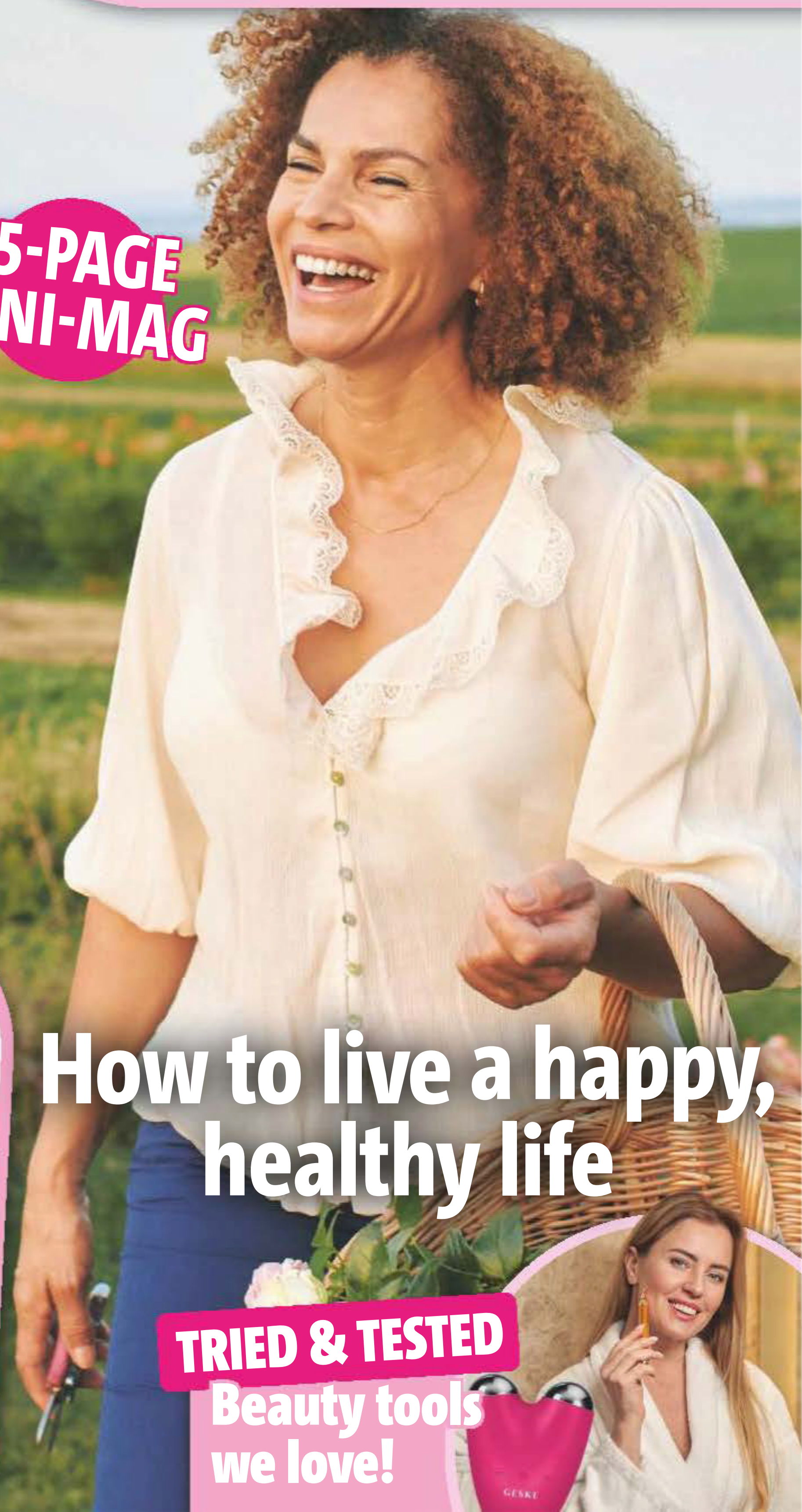

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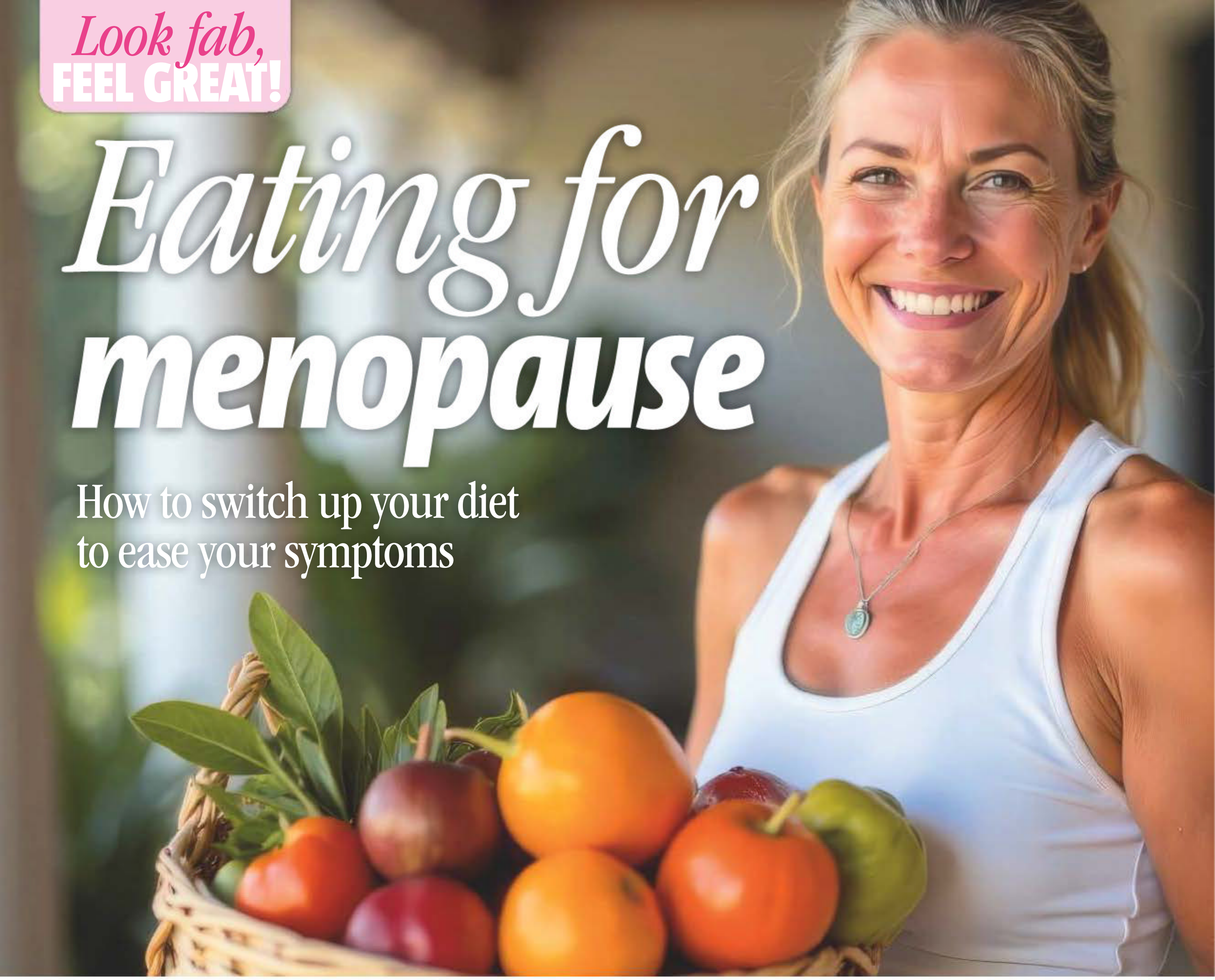


# Eating for menopause

## How to switch up your diet to ease your symptoms

The years leading up to the menopause can be a rollercoaster ride for many of us. 'For women in midlife, every day can feel like one of those obstacle courses on a TV show, a never-ending round of challenges,' explains Pippa Campbell, an experienced functional hormone nutritionist, naturopath and certified metabolic balance coach (pippacampbellhealth.com). 'Clients often tell me that they were coping with the juggle – but then, suddenly, in their late 30s or during their 40s, they weren't. The hormonal changes of the perimenopause can be the last straw in a busy life, the thing that wipes women out.

Olive oil is a nutritional hero

'I have heard from hundreds of women who aren't sleeping, who can't think, who feel at the end of their tether, who don't feel like themselves any more. Please be assured that the years leading up to menopause do not have to be marred by symptoms.

'If you look after yourself with good food and habits, you can spend these years feeling energetic and clear-headed, able to work and be a good parent, daughter and/or partner, pain-free so you can exercise, feeling positive so you can have good relationships and just get on with living.'

In her new book, *Eat Right, Balance Hormones* (Bonnier Books, £16.99), Pippa reveals how to do exactly that. Here, she shares some extracts.

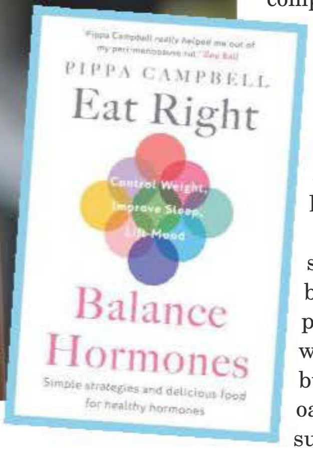
> 'These years do not have to be marred by symptoms'

## Prioritise protein

'As we age, we lose muscle. And this loss speeds up in perimenopause due to the shift in hormones. Amino acids in protein are the building blocks of muscle, which is why eating enough protein at every meal is so important. Amino acids also build neurotransmitters, including serotonin and dopamine, and contribute to hormone synthesis too, so eating protein at every meal helps to regulate hormone levels. Protein is also very good for satiety, which is why I advise that your first two bites of any meal are protein.' Pippa recommends aiming for around 20-30g of protein per meal (you'll get this amount from eating around 110g raw fish, poultry,

Pippa Campbell

Tweaking your diet can hack your hormones


'Pippa Campbell really helped me out of my peri-menopause rut.' Zoe Ball
PIPPA CAMPBELL
Eat Right
Control Weight, Improve Sleep, Lift Mood
Balance Hormones
Simple strategies and delicious food for healthy hormones

meat or tofu) and ideally 30g at breakfast.

## Be clever with carbs

'During perimenopause, your blood sugar response to carbohydrates changes – and not in a positive way. As oestrogen levels fall, you become less responsive to the hormone insulin, which is supposed to mop up and store spare blood sugar (glucose) as energy. While you may have felt fine in your 20s eating toast for breakfast or chocolate between meals, you can find now that if you eat sugary food and/or white carbs, they cause blood sugar spikes and crashes that leave you hungry or exhausted.

'Keeping glucose levels steady can help prevent hunger and keep mood swings to a minimum too. The best carbohydrates are low glycaemic (low GI), which are also called complex carbohydrates – that is, they release their energy into the blood steam slowly. They are high in fibre or whole grain (the fibre is what slows sugar absorption). The added bonus is that they're higher in nutrients too.'

Choose starchy vegetables, such as sweet potato, butternut squash, parsnips, pumpkin and potatoes; wholegrains, including buckwheat noodles, quinoa, oats, wild or basmati rice; fruit, such as apples, cherries and all berries, kiwi fruit, plums, peaches, greengages and apricots, watermelon and honeydew melon, lemon, lime and grapefruit.

## Don't fear fats

'This may be hard to believe but a lot of fats are nutritional heroes, not villains! They make cell membranes, are essential for synthesising hormones, are anti-inflammatory and are needed for you to absorb the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K. Making sure you're eating enough of the right fats really helps with satiety and balancing blood sugar, too.'

Pippa suggests cooking with extra-virgin olive oil, coconut oil or ghee, and eating nuts, seeds, avocado and oily fish.

## Veg out

'The nutrient powerhouses of our diets, vegetables are impressive multitaskers. They're packed with vitamins and minerals – some of which are antioxidants, meaning they reduce inflammation, which is important because this is high during perimenopause. They're also brilliant for the gut because each is packed with different polyphenols – chemicals produced by plants to keep themselves free of bacteria and fungi – as well as fibre, both of which feed beneficial bacteria. Polyphenols also enhance the liver's ability to process and eliminate toxins. Every plant food contains polyphenols but those that are very rich in them include berries, cacao, turmeric and citrus fruits.'

According to Pippa, cruciferous veg, such as broccoli, kale and watercress, and those rich in sulphur, such as garlic, onion and asparagus, have key midlife benefits. She also advocates for bitter vegetables. 'These support bile production in the liver, which is needed to clear out toxins and used-up hormones,' she explains. 'Eat rocket, watercress, dandelion, radishes, mustard greens, artichokes, turnip greens and chicory. Cooking with the spices fenugreek and turmeric is good too.'

Finally, don't underestimate carrots. 'An organic carrot a day keeps hormonal imbalance away! Carrots contain a specific type of fibre that can bind to excess used-up oestrogen in the gut, helping to carry it out of the body.'

> 'An organic carrot a day keeps hormonal imbalance away!'

## Fill up on phytoestrogens

'Phytoestrogens are compounds that occur naturally in a wide range of plant foods. They mimic your body's own oestrogens in a positive way, helping to regulate levels of oestrogen in the body. This makes them a daily go-to for the perimenopausal years. Studies also suggest they could also help reduce appetite, improve skin and support bone health.

'Good sources of phytoestrogens include GMO-free, organic, fermented soy, chickpeas, lentils and beans, alfalfa, beansprouts, grapes, peanuts, berries, tea and coffee. My number one phytoestrogen for this age and stage is flaxseeds.'

Berries are rich in polyphenols

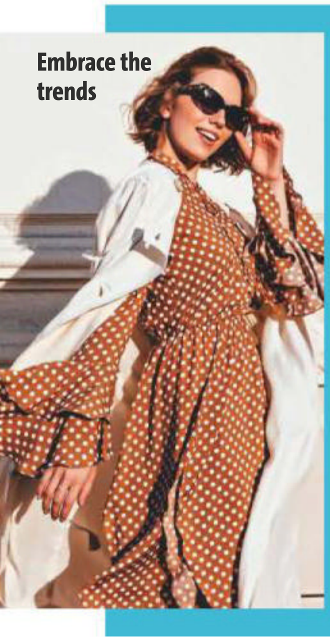
By Jo Chapman, **Pictures** Adobe Stock, Ollie Jones

# How to create CONFIDENCE

## TV presenter Anna Richardson gives her top tips for boosting self-esteem in midlife

For many of us, our self-esteem can take a knock during perimenopause, as we ride out the physical changes and emotional ups and downs.

Anna Richardson, who's 54, says that building our confidence back up again begins with a bit of naked gratitude. 'Confidence starts from the moment you get out of the shower, and you're standing in front of the mirror with no clothes on,' she says. 'I stand in front of the mirror and I look at myself from all angles, and I'm grateful for what I look like. I'm grateful for what my body's been through and for what it's still capable of doing. There's something wonderful about being able to stand in front of the mirror and say, "You are fit, you are healthy, you are strong".'



Embrace the trends

## Be a 'queenager'

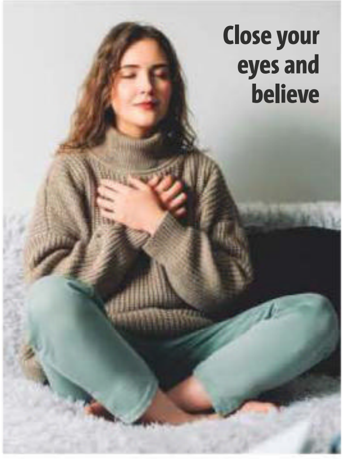
Women often report feeling invisible in midlife, but Anna is passionate about pushing against this. 'According to research by JD Williams, 73% of midlife women feel irritated that they're meant to adopt a more "age-appropriate" style,' she says.

'Society is dictating that, as you go through the menopause, you're somehow meant to wither and stop being fabulous. Midlife women are in fact very powerful, and we should kick back against the idea of invisibility. People should be looking at us and admiring everything we've achieved. We're at the height of our career, our family and our spending power, but we can also channel the playfulness we had when we were younger. We're queens, or even "queenagers", and we shouldn't be afraid of embracing trends. Our clothes are an expression of who we are, and our subconscious mind. So make them count. If you look good, you feel good, and vice versa.'

## Try visualisation

Anna is a big believer in the power of hypnotherapy and is a qualified cognitive hypnotherapist. If you're heading into a social situation and need a confidence boost, she recommends this exercise.

'Your mind responds to two things – the pictures in your head and the words you say to yourself. So, close your eyes and imagine a time when you felt at your very best. Visualise what you're wearing, what's happening and listen to what's going on around you – think about the smells too. Create a vivid picture, then say to yourself three times, "I am my best self, I love being me, I radiate confidence".

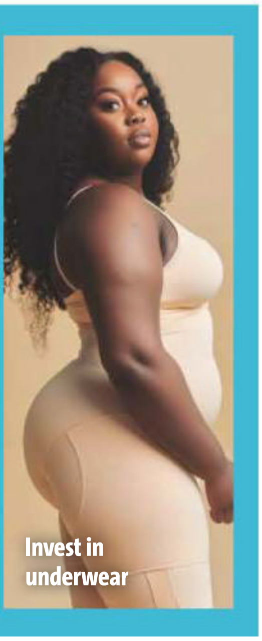


Close your eyes and believe

Say it more emphatically every time, then take five deep breaths and open your eyes. You're now in that space of confidence. It's very powerful.'

You can rebuild self-esteem

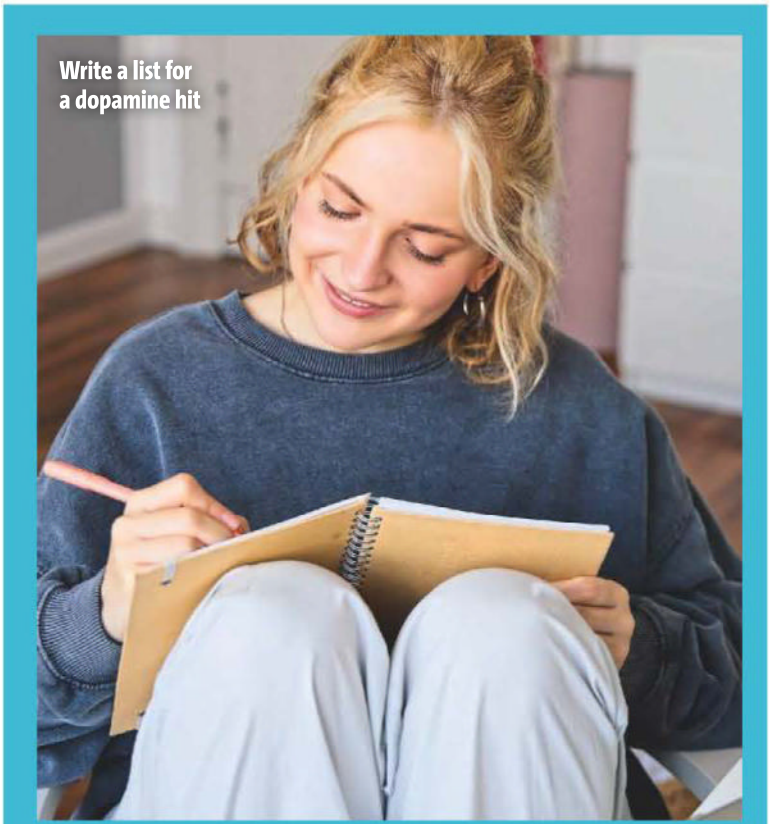
## Wear a corset



Invest in underwear

Anna also advises to focus on what you wear under your clothes. 'Our bodies change in midlife and I recommend investing in the best underwear and shapewear you can get your hands on,' she says. 'I'm shaped like an apple and that's got worse during the menopause, so I've invested in amazing underwear – I now have two drawers full of it. I've moved away from bras and knickers, and I now wear shapewear and sculpting bodysuits, which pull my tummy in. If I want to wear something strapless, I'll wear a corset.'

Anna proved her own point during a partywear shoot, when stylist Gok Wan convinced her to wear a metallic bodycon dress. 'He told me, "You've got your shapewear on, now get your boobs out and get into the dress, you can pull it off". And he was right – it all starts with your underwear.'



Write a list for a dopamine hit

## Note your achievements

To boost self-esteem, Anna recommends taking a few minutes to reflect on your achievements. 'I did this exercise recently, and it's brilliant for confidence,' she says. 'I wrote down all of my achievements from when I started work in 1993, and it was such a dopamine hit. It's like bathing yourself in self-love! If we're lucky enough to get to our 50s, we have all achieved huge things, whether that's giving birth to amazing kids or taking care of our parents. We've all achieved a hell of a lot, and people don't tell us that enough. Be your own cheerleader.'

## Say a morning affirmation

Our subconscious is primed to look for the negative, but changing that mindset is the difference between a good and bad day. 'We tend to look for everything that's bad in our lives, just so that we're alert to how we can protect ourselves,' explains Anna. 'But you can train your mind to start looking for the good things in your life rather than the negative, and that will make a massive improvement to your confidence. If you wake up and go, "I'm going to have a great day. It's not raining, I can hear the birds and I love what I'm going to be doing", you're going to have a much, much better day.'

Train your mind to be positive

**Anna collaborated with JD Williams for their Midlife Redefined initiative, addressing the unique challenges faced by women in midlife. JD Williams is committed to designing clothes that accommodate the ever-changing silhouette of midlife women, offering products in sizes 8-32.**

By Sophie Barton, **Pictures** Shutterstock, Adobe Stock

# 'At 60 I became a super-fit gran!'

The stress of working in hospitals during the pandemic saw the pounds creep on for Julia Kennedy, 60. But she was determined to live a healthier future…

**BEFORE**
**15st**
**Size 20**

**Wearing her scrubs in July 2020**

My weight had always been up and down due to raising four children and managing a busy career as a mental-health professional. Over time, I just stopped paying attention to what I ate, and the weight slowly crept up. But the real tipping point came when the pandemic hit in 2020. The stress was unlike anything I'd ever known. The hospital where I worked was overwhelmed, and my colleagues and I were working endless shifts in suffocating PPE. When we did get a break, we'd eat whatever was available, and kind-hearted members of the public and restaurants would donate food.

It was hard not to be tempted by the chocolate and cake because I had a very sweet tooth. I convinced myself that I deserved it, and at the end of a shift, I'd go home, crack open a bottle of red wine, wolf down a ready meal and some cheese, then collapse into bed.

Before the pandemic, I was a size 14 to 16, but as the months dragged on, even my XXL work scrubs felt tight. I found myself reaching for bigger sizes and avoiding mirrors. I was exhausted and miserable and, by the end of the year, I had ballooned to a size 20 and weighed 15st. At just 5ft 2in, that was a lot of extra weight. My mum noticed. She didn't say anything, but I saw it in her face when I visited before Christmas. I brushed it off, telling myself I had bigger things to worry about.

Then, two months later, Mum died suddenly. The shock and grief hit me hard, but it also forced me to wake up. Life was too short. I had spent years telling myself I needed to lose weight, starting diets and giving up. *I can't keep doing this to myself*, I thought. By then, I knew I was going to be a grandmother because my eldest, Gemma, was pregnant with twins. I knew I wouldn't have the energy to support her or keep up with my grandchildren at the size I was. My knees ached, and I could barely climb stairs without gripping the bannister and stopping to catch my breath. I knew that if I didn't do something now, I never would.

So, in April 2021, I signed up to the LighterLife plan after seeing an online ad. It was a meal-replacement plan with shakes and bars instead of proper food. Normally, I'd have dismissed it, but I was drawn to its simplicity – no thinking or cooking involved.

**Julia before LighterLife**

**Holding her grandsons Arthur and Grayson in 2021**

AFTER
11st 5lb
Size 12-14

Julia feels like a new woman

'Maybe that's what I need,' I told myself. The first week was tough going. I had headaches, suffered fatigue and felt constant hunger. I snacked on LighterLife broth and jelly to get me through, and I soon started to feel better. The weight began coming off and my LighterLife consultant, Tracy, ran weekly virtual group sessions where we talked about our triggers and relationships with food. It was a great way to stay motivated and accountable.

By June, I had lost two stone, then the following month, Gemma gave birth to her boys, Arthur and Grayson. Because of COVID restrictions, I couldn't see them in the hospital. It was two weeks before I finally met them and, when I did, they were tiny and perfect. Holding them both in my arms, I felt so happy and relieved.

I knew I had to be healthy for them, for Gemma and the rest of my family. I stuck to LighterLife, eating my four meal-replacement packs a day. I worked long shifts without reaching for snacks or junk food, and I helped out Gemma whenever I could.

By August, I was a size 14 and feeling great. My knees no longer ached, and I had so much more energy. One day, a colleague said, 'Let's go on a hiking holiday.'

So, in the September we flew to Italy and hiked the Cinque Terre – five stunning coastal villages perched on cliffs above the sea. It was gruelling, hot and steep, and the old me couldn't have done it. Whenever we stopped at a beach, we'd strip down to our bikinis and go for a dip. I ate pasta and gelato, drank wine, and soaked in the sunshine. When I got home, I went straight back on LighterLife. By the following year, I had lost a total of 5st and was a size 8 to 10.

I felt like a new woman – a grandmother who could run, play, and keep up with her grandsons. Shopping in high-street shops was surreal. Picking out clothes I never would have dared to try before led to a bit of a spree!

After having reached my target weight, I switched to LighterLife's maintenance plan, gradually incorporating real food back into my diet. I was getting along fine, but then I'd look in the mirror and see wrinkly skin on my face, arms and thighs. Most of it didn't bother me, but my face and neck did. I even considered cosmetic procedures like fillers, but ultimately decided against them. Instead, I let myself gain a little weight back, settling at a comfortable size 12 to 14.

I never returned to my old habits as LighterLife had reset my brain. I now no longer snack between meals, and I still drink lots of water. My perception of food has completely changed as I focus on being strong and healthy and not what the scales say. Now I eat lean meat, fresh veg and organic where I can. I cook from scratch and avoid anything processed. I still enjoy wine, prosecco and the occasional piece of chocolate, but I'm mindful about it.

I stay active by hiking, doing circuits at the gym, Pilates, and swimming. This year, I'm taking on Tough Mudder – a mud run and obstacle course – something I'd never have dreamed of doing before. Last year, my friend and I climbed Ben Nevis, and the celebratory beer afterwards was the best I'd ever had.

At 60, I feel healthier than I did in my 50s. My weight fluctuates a little, but I don't let that bother me. Arthur and Grayson are turning four in July. We explore the woods, play football, and go swimming. They are full of energy and happiness, and so am I.

## DIET BEFORE

**BREAKFAST** Toast with butter and marmalade
**LUNCH** M&S ready meal
**DINNER** Ready meal, chocolate, red wine, and cheese
**SNACKS** Bacon roll, crisps, biscuits, pastries, cake, donated restaurant food

## DIET AFTER

**BREAKFAST** Poached egg or avocado on sourdough toast
**LUNCH** Seasoned chicken breast with salad or roasted veg
**DINNER** Chickpea and spinach curry with cauliflower rice
**SNACKS** None

**By** Matthew Barbour, Elaine Hayward, **Pictures** Paul Buller/LighterLife

# 'I'm not panicking about my age – I LOVE being 50'

Denise van Outen on early morning workouts, prioritising her wellbeing and how she gets holiday-ready…

She 'puts the work in' in order to feel beach confident

Turning 50 might be a daunting milestone for some, but for Denise van Outen, her big birthday last May was the start of an exciting new chapter. Looking happier, healthier, and more confident than ever, the star is proof that life goes from strength to strength. 'I love being 50, it's great,' says Denise, who has daughter Betsy, 15, with ex Lee Mead. 'I've embraced it. When you get a bit older you relax and you enjoy everything that little bit more. I'm prioritising my mental and physical health, but not out of some kind of panic because of my age. I just have more free time now that Betsy is older. It's harder to juggle everything when your kids are younger.'

With daughter Betsy

## FEELING CONFIDENT

And Denise is certainly putting that free time to good use. In addition to doing regular DJ gigs, TV presenting and writing a new sitcom, she is throwing herself into exercise. She's also enjoying breaks abroad, and was recently snapped soaking up the sun on a work trip to the Maldives. So, how does she stay in such good shape?

'I'm mindful of healthy eating throughout the year, but I eat more colourful foods and fruit before a holiday,' explains the TV star. 'I step up my exercise too and put in more effort in my PT sessions. At my age, you want to put in a bit of work if you want to feel confident in swimwear.'

> 'I step up my exercise'

'I've been training a lot,' adds Denise. 'At the weekends, I get up really early and do a PT session while Betsy is still in bed. I also have a personal trainer, who sets me workouts for the week. I mainly do weights, because you need to make sure you have strong bones, but I also walk a lot with my two dogs. I'm always zipping around, I'm quite active.'

Denise is a fan of intermittent fasting, and credits ditching breakfast with boosting her energy levels. 'I don't wake up hungry, so it works for me,' she explains. 'I also exercise in the morning, and I don't like to train when I've eaten too much. By the time I've done the school run, my emails and bits of work, it's lunchtime. I don't do intermittent fasting on holiday though; I love a buffet breakfast!'

Denise adores holidays, so much so that she has just become Marella Cruises' chief chill-out officer. This is a new role that involves showing people how they can unwind and de-stress

Lifting weights to improve her strength

before they start their break.

'Life for me is a constant juggle and, when you finally get on holiday, you realise how much you need it,' explains Denise. 'This is about setting that mental out-of-office sooner, instead of leaving it until you get there. Give yourself a chance to prep and get excited, so once you're on holiday you feel completely relaxed. I'm a massive fan of cruises. You don't have to worry about anything and it's brilliant to see so many places on one holiday.'

Denise is working with Marella Cruises

## SELF-CARE RITUALS

When she needs to unwind, Denise is a big fan of jumping on her decks at home. 'I find it really therapeutic,' she says. 'It takes me away from thinking too much, and my holiday playlist instantly puts me in a good mood. I use a red light LED face mask too, which is great for the skin. I lie there feeling relaxed, daydreaming about my holiday. I really look after my skin – I have a Bionic facial every six to eight weeks and I always buy products containing SPF.'

Before she hits the beach, Denise also takes time for a bit of self-care. 'I get a wax and a pedicure,' she says. 'I haven't tried laser hair removal treatment, but I'm not massively hairy! Betsy is my travel buddy and, when I get my nails done, she gets hers done too. We'll sit and have a catch-up. I wear less make-up in the summer, because when you're out in the heat it can feel a bit stuck in your skin. I go for a natural, glowy look, using a tinted moisturiser and bronzer or highlighter.'

Denise also credits a collagen supplement Elavate with giving her skin a boost. She started taking it earlier this year, after she noticed she felt stiff when she did her PT sessions and her skin was looking dry. 'My nails were weak a few months ago, but they are stronger now,' she says. 'It's helped thicken my hair, I'm doing my PT sessions with more ease and I feel like my skin is glowing.'

## MINIMAL ALCOHOL

Sleep is also a priority for the star, who has spoken openly about taking HRT. 'I try to mentally switch off in bed now,' she says. 'My phone goes on airplane mode, and I read. I got rid of the TV too, because it's too easy to sit in bed watching it. I'm trying to just have healthier habits, and a healthy approach to making me feel good mentally and physically. Your mental wellbeing is just as important, you need to look after yourself.'

'Life is a constant juggle'

And while her DJ career means she's a regular on the festival scene, Denise says she's also 'pretty sensible' when it comes to booze these days. 'Last year was my biggest blow out,' she says. 'It was my 50th, so there was a lot of rosé, but I'm not a massive drinker and I don't drink during the week. I do a lot of DJ gigs and festivals, and I have a rule that I never drink when I'm working. You can get amazing alternatives now [like 0% alcohol beer] and still feel like you're part of the party.'

● *Denise has been appointed as Marella Cruises' chief chill-out officer, helping Brits switch on their 'mental out of office' and get holiday-ready earlier. Visit @marellacruises on Instagram*

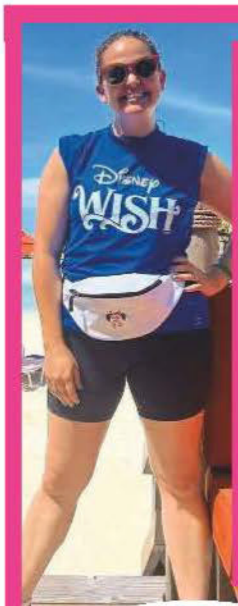
**By** Sophie Barton, **Pictures** BACKGRID, Instagram

# CELEB FI

Discover the secrets of these fabu
are motivating us to be our best s

## Sara Davies, 40

After years of yo-yo dieting, Sara decided to focus instead on managing her health. With gestational diabetes in her past and polycystic ovary syndrome to consider, she's made smart changes, like starting running. Her goal? Feeling good inside and out, no crash diets allowed. Amen.



## Giovanna Fletcher, 40

Giovanna always keeps it real, whether it's about the stress of parenting or the difficult journey to loving the skin you're in. 'A lot of us are learning to love our bodies. The more I talk the more empowered I feel.' Her new *Couch to 5k* podcast is a must for great running tips.

## Alex Scott, 40

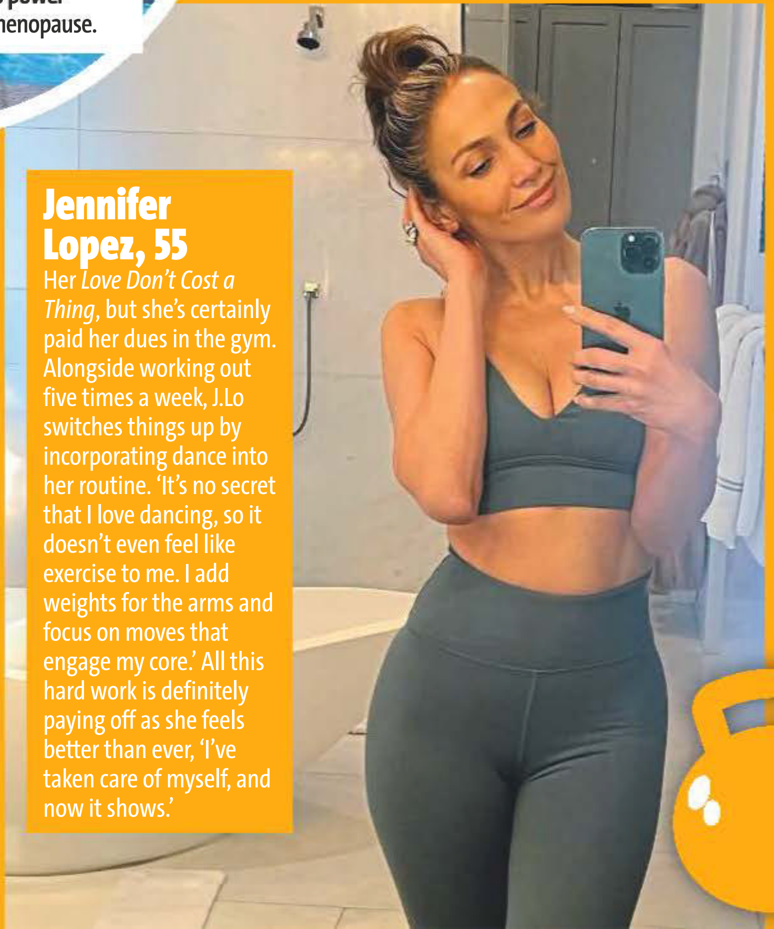
Since hanging up her football boots, former Lioness Alex Scott's career has been on a winning streak. She's claimed the role of main host on *Football Focus*, penned her powerful memoir *How (Not) to be Strong*, and bagged the title of Best Sports Presenter for her exceptional coverage of the women's World Cup last year. Talk about a hat-trick!

## Jo Whiley, 59

Jo Whiley's got the ultimate double act: headlining gigs and hitting her health goals. Between late-night radio shows and leg-pressing 120kg, the mum-of-four has completely revamped her diet to tackle arthritis head-on, while embracing strength training to power through menopause.

## Adele Roberts, 46

After undergoing cancer treatment, Adele has proven that strength is mental as much as it is physical. She's regularly sharing her fitness milestones, from her comeback after surgery to recently earning the Six Star medal for completing all major marathons across the globe in just eight months. She also set the record as the fastest woman to complete one with an ileostomy. When she's not breaking a sweat, she's campaigning for inclusivity in sport.



## Jennifer Lopez, 55

Her *Love Don't Cost a Thing*, but she's certainly paid her dues in the gym. Alongside working out five times a week, J.Lo switches things up by incorporating dance into her routine. 'It's no secret that I love dancing, so it doesn't even feel like exercise to me. I add weights for the arms and focus on moves that engage my core.' All this hard work is definitely paying off as she feels better than ever, 'I've taken care of myself, and now it shows.'

**By** Louise Bennett, **Pictures** Shutterstock, Instagram

## Victoria Beckham, 51

Posh's approach to fitness is nothing short of disciplined. Despite a busy schedule, the fashion mogul starts her day at 5.30am with a 7km treadmill workout, combining jogging, walking and running. She follows up with a rigorous strength session, focusing on legs, arms and core, always pushing her limits. With her packed schedule of family, fashion and fitness, she's delivering on every front!

## Davina McCall, 57

Davina is the epitome of ageless fitness. At 57, she's in the best shape of her life, coming back after surgery on her brain with a varied fitness routine which includes weights, yoga and HIIT. 'I want to show people that it doesn't matter how old you are – you can still get fit and enjoy being fit,' she says.

# T LIST

lous over-40s stars, who
elves this summer!

## Gemma Atkinson, 40

The former *Strictly* star is no stranger to sharing her sweat-drenched workouts on social media, but it's her down-to-earth vibe that really wins us, and her followers, over. She's not afraid to keep it real, chatting openly about body image, parenting and encouraging women (especially over 40) to pick up weights and embrace those gains!

## Alesha Dixon, 46

The *Britain's Got Talent* judge swears by strength conditioning sessions she does twice a week with her PT, Janet Malinowska, consisting of squats, lunges and planks. She pairs these sessions with Pilates and yoga classes which she says help her brain as well as her body. 'When I'm consistent it has a ripple effect on all my other choices throughout the day.'

## Coleen Rooney, 39

Coleen looked sensational on last year's *I'm a Celebrity*. Her secret? the mum-of-four was rumoured to have stepped up her training pre-jungle to three Pilates classes per week at her favourite studio, Rise Fitness in Liverpool – a serious sweat sesh the WAG once said leaves her 'aching' the day after but feeling 'amazing'. With no reformer apparatus available down-under, Coleen was spotted slipping away from campmates to do some squats. Well, you've gotta get your fitness fix somehow, right?

## Katie Piper, 41

Having earned an OBE for her campaigning services to charity and victims of burns and other disfigurement injuries, Katie juggles staying fit with her busy schedule by getting up at 5am to run with her local mum mates. She says, 'I gain confidence in seeing progress and breaking through barriers. I don't want to be tired at the weekends, I want to be able to commute, work and be a mum who chases my kids around.'

# Sinitta: 'I've always been a health nut!'

## The singer chats about the wellness routine that keeps her looking incredible at 61

She practises Pilates regularly

She's been in the spotlight since the mid-'80s, when *So Macho* hit the charts. And 40 years on, former pop star Sinitta looks better than ever. When we catch up with the singer, she's fizzing with energy, despite the fact she gets up at the crack of dawn. By 8am, she's already done a tough workout in 95°F heat and ticked off a series of 'little rituals' designed to boost her wellbeing.

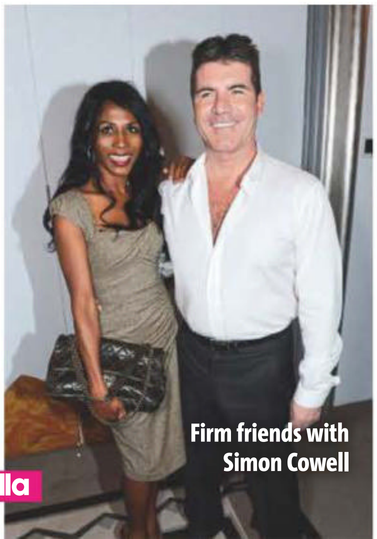
> 'I've dissolved my fillers'

'I've always been a health nut,' Sinitta, 61, tells us. 'I get up at 5am and take probiotic supplement Symprove, drink an espresso cup of fresh lime with hot water, and take a teaspoon of black seed oil. It doesn't taste pleasant, but I think it's amazing. Then I put sea moss gel into my herbal tea. I also drink 1.5 litres of water.'

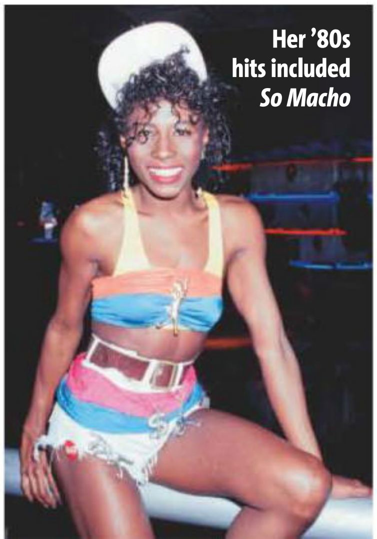
In addition, Sinitta takes vitamin D, and every other day she injects a NAD supplement into her thigh, which is said to help with energy production, metabolism and slow down the ageing process.

'The needles are tiny,' explains Sinitta, who recently teamed up with '80s icons Toyah Willcox and Martin Kemp to celebrate lifestyle retailer White Stuff's 40th birthday. 'It does sting a bit, but it's a micro dose. By the time I hit my workout class at 6.30am, I'm hydrated and energised.'

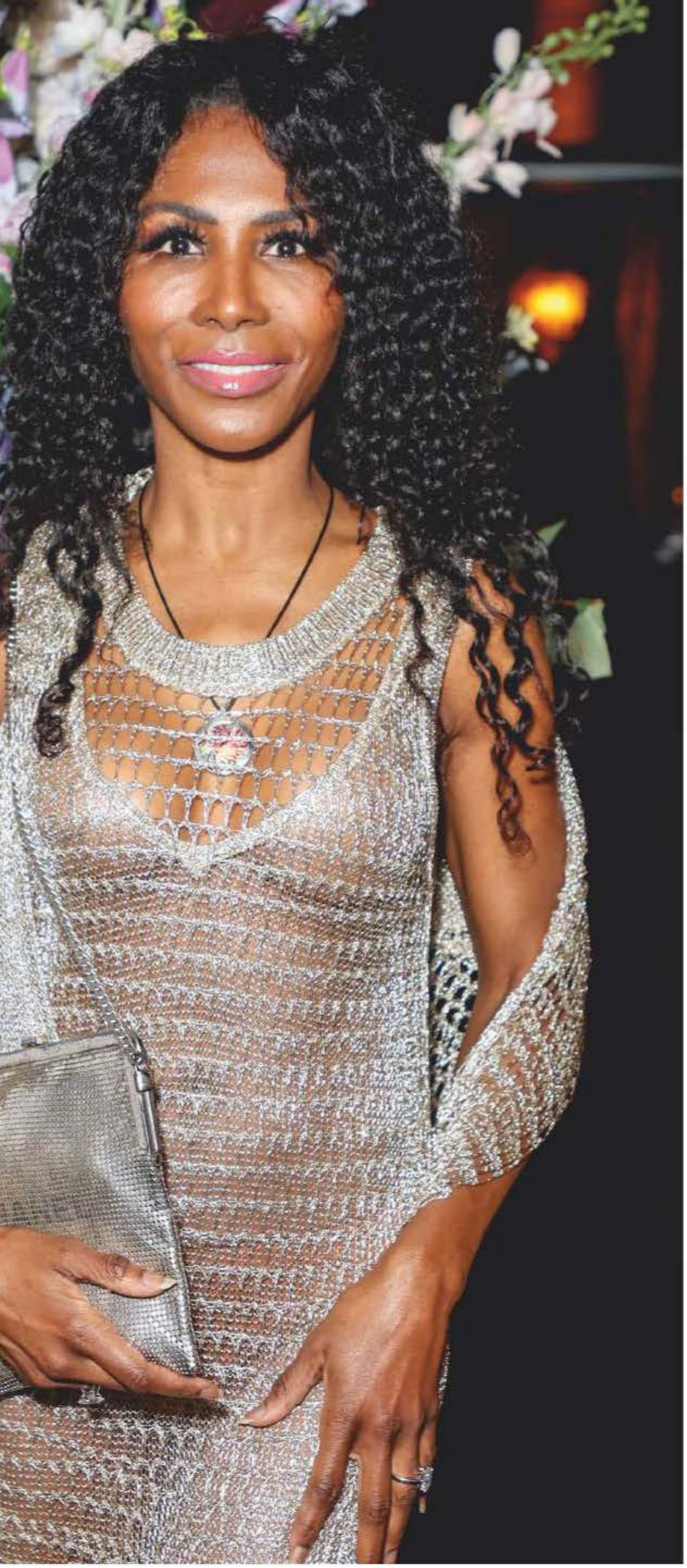
When it comes to keeping fit, Sinitta alternates Pilates classes with The Tracey Anderson Method, which has a star-studded following, including J.Lo. 'The class is hard enough, but the



Firm friends with Simon Cowell



Her '80s hits included *So Macho*



studio is heated like a sauna,' she says. 'You're working out and sweating profusely at the same time, but you feel incredible afterwards and your skin is glowing. By 8am I'm in the car, heading home, when everyone else is just getting started.'

Sinitta's diet is also a well-rehearsed routine. She avoids sugar and gluten, and eats plenty of fish and veg. 'I enjoy porridge, it's so tasty and filling,' she says. 'I do need to up my protein, so I'm planning to take a protein powder mixed with almond milk.'

Sinitta teamed up with Toyah Willcox and Martin Kemp for a campaign with White Stuff

Meanwhile, Sinitta reveals she's glowing on the inside too, due to the mystery man she's been dating since 2023. 'I was single for so long, I wasn't sure I had room for someone in my life,' she says. 'But he's a dream and a complete gentleman. He's northern, earthy and a lot of fun. We're enjoying nice date nights and, if anything, I'm probably the calm one. He's a bit crazy! I could have stayed at home reading books for 20 years, but he gets me out and about, and he's always up for anything. He has great energy.'

> 'I wear factor 50 every day'

Sinitta's partner is also popular with her children, Magdalena, 19, and Zac, 18, who she adopted with her ex, Andy Willner. 'It was my son who said, "Mum, you need to get a boyfriend, you can't be on your own all the time," she laughs. 'I was shocked, because I thought the kids liked having me to themselves, but he told me I should be out, having fun and dressing up. They like me being extrovert.'

One look at Sinitta's wardrobe, and it's clear how extrovert she is. Her iconic outfits include her yellow Muscle Beach cropped tee, plus her infamous banana-leaf dress, which she debuted on *The X Factor* in 2009 alongside ex and best pal Simon Cowell. 'I've kept all my outfits,' she laughs. 'Apart from the dress, which was made from real leaves.'

Recently, she celebrated '80s fashion in style when she headed to White Stuff's HQ with fellow singing legends Martin Kemp and Toyah Willcox. Together the trio manned the phones, taking orders from the brand's Rewind '85 collection, which is a remake of the original line of sweats and tees created in 1985. 'It was like a class reunion,' laughs Sinitta. 'Toyah is tiny and absolutely lovely. Martin is just gorgeous, he's even more handsome now than he was.'

Like her '80s counterparts, Sinitta looks better than ever and is remarkably wrinkle free. One thing she won't be touching, however, are fillers. 'Before lockdown my weight plummeted after a family disaster,' she says. 'I looked skeletal and people kept asking if I was OK, so I had a load of fillers. When I gained weight again in lockdown, I looked like I'd swallowed a balloon. It was so distorted, and I had six months of treatment to dissolve the fillers. It was really bad.'

Now, Sinitta sticks to quality skincare (she's set to launch her own brand) and she swears by double cleansing.

'You need to protect your skin, I've been really careful since the early '90s,' she says. 'I use factor 50 every day, even in winter, and I wear a sun visor, even in the car. People used to laugh at me on the beach in Barbados because I looked like Darth Vader, but the sun can be so damaging.'

● *Shop White Stuff's Rewind '85 collection in store or online now at whitestuff.com/rewind85_shop*

By Sophie Barton, **Pictures** Doug Jackson/Pin Pep

# POWERFUL PILATES

## Try these humbling exercises to get a full-body burn!

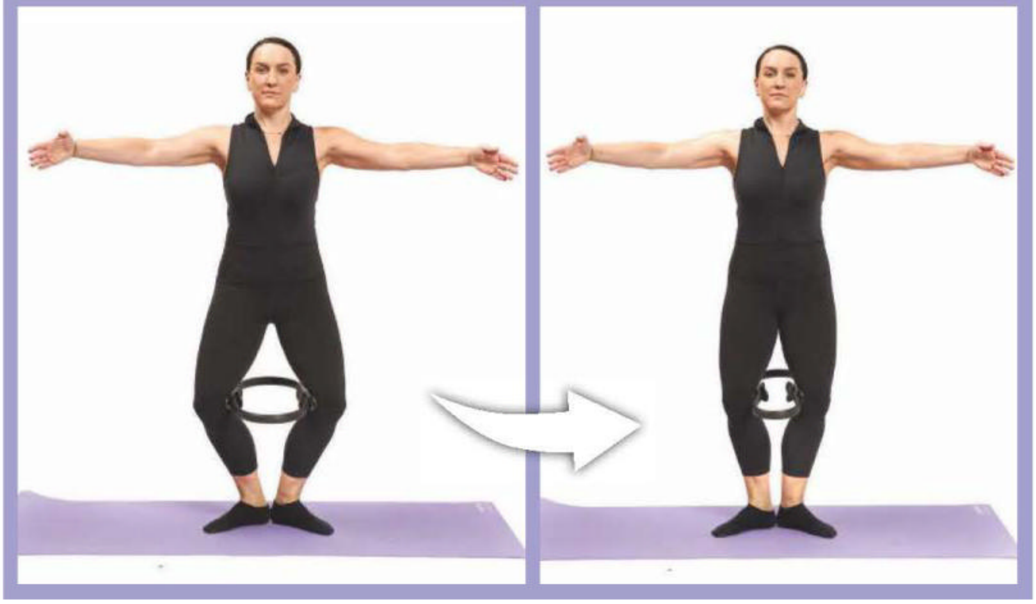
Pilates is experiencing a major boom right now, with studios popping up on every high street. It's almost impossible to ignore this challenging, low-impact exercise trend, but with classes costing up to £25 a session, can you recreate the same burn at home?

'Pilates is a system of exercises performed on a mat, and with equipment that uses springs for resistance, which create a whole-body workout,' explains Rebecca Convey, founder of Kinetic Pilates studio in London. 'The mat work can be easily done at home, but unless you have a lot of space and a lot of money, Pilates equipment is not that accessible for home use.'

However, Rebecca suggests, 'The Magic Circle, or Pilates Ring, is a simple piece of equipment that is readily available and cost-effective. It can be used to create resistance and mimic a spring-like experience, helping you find strength, lift, and align the body. Don't squeeze too hard – just enough to create a reaction in the rest of the body.'

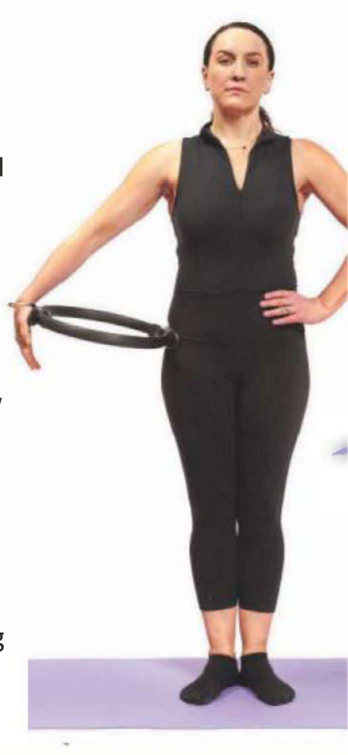
## Standing plié

Place the Magic Circle between your legs, just above your knees. Have your ankles as close together as you can with bent knees. Pull your inner core, or powerhouse, in and up and gently try to straighten your knees and press the Magic Circle. Hold for 3-5 seconds and then repeat five times.



## Side hold

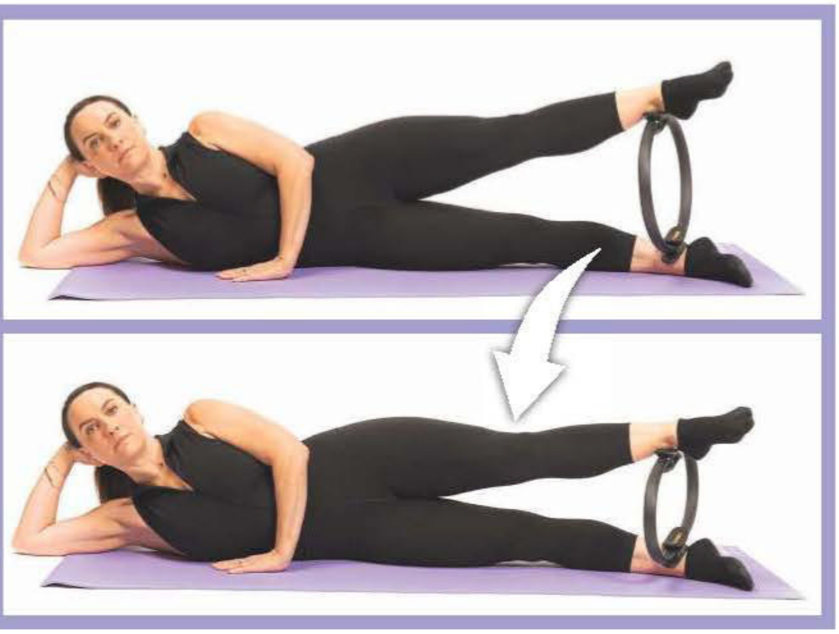
Stand with your heels together and your toes slightly apart, placing the Magic Circle on one hip. Rest your wrist against it. Pull your powerhouse in and up, and gently press the Magic Circle, using it to increase the work of the muscles in your side, back and abdominals. Try to lift your spine to the ceiling and hold for 3-5 seconds. Repeat 3-6 times.



● Established over 15 years ago, Kinetic Pilates in London is the go-to for those seeking the true essence of Pilates. With two studios in London, you will learn the classical Romana's Pilates method on a wide range of equipment. They offer private and group classes, and online options. For more info, go to kineticpilates.com

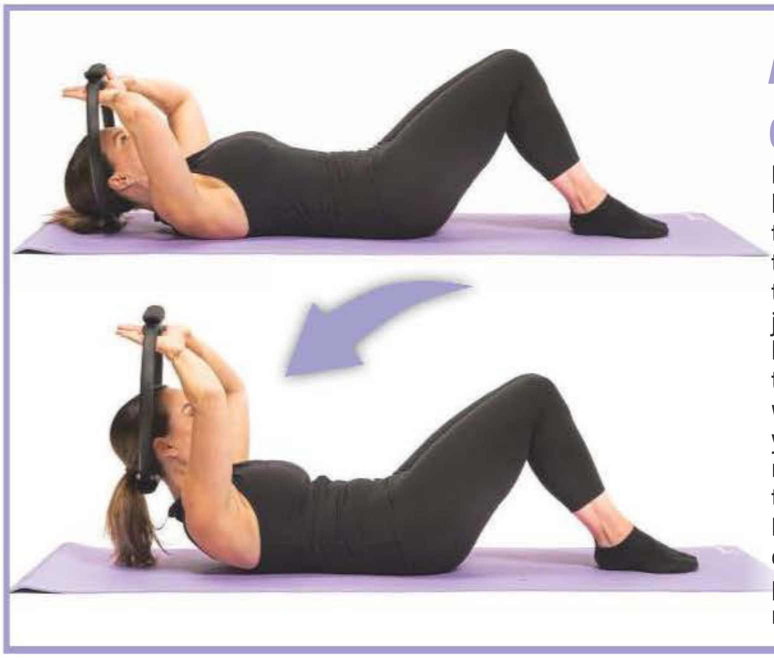
## Lying pulse

Lie on your side, making sure your back is in a long line, and move your legs slightly forward. Place the Magic Circle between your ankles and, pulling your powerhouse in and up, gently press the Magic Circle with your foot, focusing on the muscles of your inner thighs and abdominals. Hold for 3-5 seconds then repeat 5 times before changing sides.



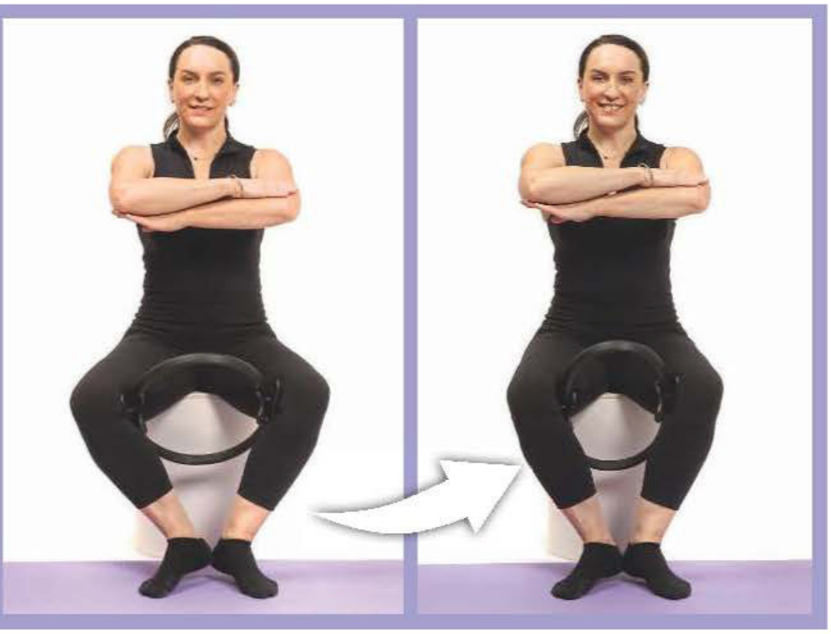
## Abdominal crunch

Lie down on your back with your knees bent and place your feet on the floor. Press your legs together to engage your inner thighs. Place the Magic Circle under your head, just on the base of the skull, and hold your hands on the inside of the Magic Circle above your face with palms facing up. Engage your powerhouse and relax your neck, pressing your hands against the Magic Circle to lift your head. Pull your abdominals in and up, ensuring you are not letting them pop out. Hold for 3-5 seconds and repeat five times.



## Seated squeeze

Sit on a chair that allows your knees to be at right angles. Place the Magic Circle between your knees and pull your powerhouse in and up, gently pressing the Magic Circle, using it to increase the work of the muscles of your inner thighs, and abdominals. Try to lift your spine to the ceiling and hold for 3-5 seconds. Repeat 5 times.



**By** Louise Bennett **Pictures:** Marco Vittur

# Plump it up

### Could these techniques, tips and key ingredients really give you a needle-free face lift?

Catherine, Princess of Wales

Wrinkles are an inevitable and inescapable fact of ageing, but unrealistic expectations and pressure to look younger have many of us scrambling for anything to eradicate those stubborn lines.

In-clinic injectable Botox has long been a popular fix, as it temporarily paralyses muscles to reduce expression lines.

Now, thanks to advances in technology and the boom of science-backed skincare, experts say we're able to gain similar, if not identical, wrinkle-relaxing results without needles.

## Harness the power of peptides

Heather Wish, the leading UK education manager at Paula's Choice says, 'Wrinkles are the first sign of ageing that most of us see, so it's no surprise that it's one of the most common skin concerns. They're a normal part of ageing, but if you want to reduce the signs, introducing peptides to your routine will benefit you greatly.'

Wish says, 'Peptides are essentially the building blocks of proteins, like collagen and elastin, that give your skin its structure, firmness and resilience. Unfortunately, as we age, our body's natural production of these essential proteins slows down. This decline eventually leads to wrinkles, sagging skin and a loss of youthful bouncy skin. This is where topical peptides come to the rescue and, by introducing them directly to your skin, you're providing it with the tools it needs to rebuild firmness, tensile strength and reduced slackening around the chin and jawline.'

Wish suggests using Paula's Choice Pro-Collagen Multi Peptide Booster, £58, as the 'highly targeted gel treatment with six specialised peptides softens expression lines in just 15 minutes, while plumping and firming skin for a stronger, more youthful complexion. It's ideal for anyone seeking a targeted treatment to address first signs of sagging, loss of firmness, stubborn expression lines, crow's feet and forehead lines.'

> 'It softens expression lines in just 15 minutes'

If you're looking to change up your serum, it's rumoured that the Princess of Wales's favourite pro-ageing, needle-free alternative is Biotulin Supreme Skin Gel, £44, as it effectively reduces fine lines and wrinkles in just 60 minutes. Its key active ingredient, acmella oleracea

The Face Rocket 5-in-1 Facial Firming and Toning Device

extract, gently and naturally targets the neuromuscular mechanisms of the skin that are responsible for wrinkles. Instead of the muscles being paralysed like they are with Botox, they are relaxed, which allows the skin to soften while maintaining its expressiveness and elasticity.

## Tone from home

As well as sophisticated serums, there's a growing range of non-invasive, at-home sculpting devices available to buy that can improve muscle tone, enhance collagen production and encourage a fresh appearance. Emma Coleman, senior Magnitone ambassador, clinic director and dermatology nurse suggests using Magnitone Face Rocket 5-in-1 Facial Firming and Toning Device, £149, which combines microcurrent, massage and LED light therapy.

Coleman explains, 'Microcurrent therapy mimics the body's natural electrical currents to stimulate facial muscles, improving muscle tone and elasticity.'

LED lights have become popular more recently and Coleman says, 'Red light is particularly effective for stimulating collagen production. Over time, this can result in a reduction of fine lines and wrinkles, giving the skin a smoother appearance.'

The best thing about an at-home device? You can perform professional-grade treatments in the comfort of your own home and save hundreds, if not thousands of pounds a month.

But does this needle-free alternative actually work? *Bella* reader Clare D'Costa, 53, from London, has been using the Magnitone Face Rocket for six months. Her Botox wasn't lasting any longer than two months and, as it has no effect on collagen or elastin and does not improve skin texture and quality, she wanted to find a skin-smoothing and plumping alternative. She says, 'I wanted results without having to go to a clinic. I'm more apprehensive these days of injecting substances into my face and I wanted to try a more natural approach. My face feels and looks brighter and fresher, and I love that I'm not putting any incisions or harsh chemicals into my skin any more. With consistent use, my skin is tighter and plumper than before and the device has become part of my daily routine. It's the perfect alternative to needles.'

## Work it out

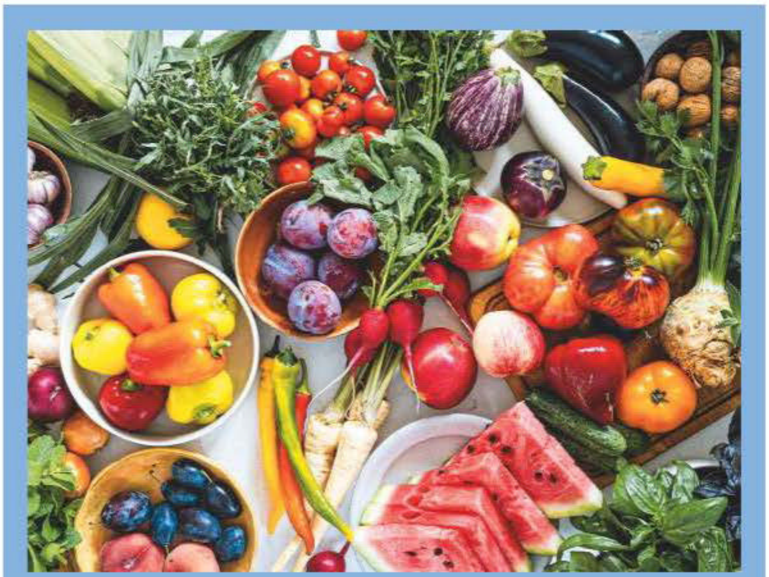
Emily Rose Lansley, celebrity facialist for Salma Hayek, Anne Hathaway and Emily Blunt takes a more hands-on approach to achieving a youthful complexion. She says, 'Sculpting massage techniques will improve skin elasticity, reduce fine lines and wrinkles, smooth uneven skin texture and minimise enlarged pores.'

Her signature treatment combines lymphatic drainage and deep-tissue massage with lesser-known buccal massage therapy, which Lansley says works on the muscles inside the mouth to help to improve blood circulation, remove excess fluid and reduce puffiness. To gain similar results, she recommends DIY at-home treatments such as Gua Sha, a traditional East Asian practice that some say can help improve lymphatic drainage, which may help reduce puffiness and swelling.

Using Tweezerman Stainless Steel Gua Sha, £24, work along the jaw line, cheeks, forehead or eyes and nasal area, with an up and outward motion, to stimulate muscles to contour, lift and depuff your face.

Whatever you choose, consistency is key and it's better to tailor your skincare to what you need and try not to worry or allow what others are doing to reflect on you.

> 'I'm more apprehensive of injecting substances'



## SWITCH UP YOUR DIET

Highly inflammatory, high-in-sugar and processed foods damage collagen and elastin, stiffen arteries and blood vessels, leading to wrinkles and premature ageing. Instead, focus on a diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins and healthy fats, and reach for skin-supporting foods such as fruit, vegetables, fatty fish, nuts and seeds. In addition, look for a supplement that can help protect skin from damage. We recommend taking one capsule a day of Dose & Co Advanced Age Defy, £39.99. It's clinically formulated to protect mature skin from within and features AstaReal, a potent antioxidant formula, to help reduce the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines and diminish dark circles around the eyes. While vitamin C supports and boosts collagen formation, CoEnzyme Q10, an antioxidant, boosts skin elastic and firmness while vitamin A, also known as Retinol, supports skin cell turnover and collagen production.

By Ella Shire, **Pictures** Getty

# Anti-ageing tech tools

Skincare devices are all the rage right now, but do you need to spend big to look younger?

## Cleansing brushes

*Save*

### Primark P.S...Silicone Cleansing Brush

This cute, palm-sized gadget is comfortable to hold and easy to clean, too. Featuring soft bristles on one side, and firmer nubbins on the other, you can switch sides to navigate your face's contours and creases. With five different frequency settings, you can easily change from gentle to turbo by pressing the plus and minus buttons; press the power button again and it switches to a pulsing pattern to mix things up even more. The post-cleanse results were incredibly satisfying, even when used on oily complexions. Plus, it can be used to aid product absorption when using serums and creams. We found our skin visibly brighter and clearer after consistent use. It's affordable, versatile and effective, making it a real robust and compact multitasker.

★★★★☆

**VS**

*Splurge*

### PMD Clean

Those who suffer from dull, congested skin should seriously consider investing in this cleansing tool. With up to 7000 vibrations per minute, it breaks down any dirt and oil within your pores to minimise blemishes and restore that youthful glow. The dual-option head features soft silicone bristles on one side, which gently exfoliate skin while boosting the benefits of your choice of cleanser. On the flip side is a massage head, which feels great during moisturiser application, especially when used with the short, rhythmic vibration setting. While it doesn't tackle wrinkles, our complexions appeared noticeably clearer, with fewer blackheads, and more radiant within just one week of use. Unlike bristle brushes, the silicone fabric can easily be cleaned, minimising the risk of bacteria brewing. It's battery powered though, so stock up on AA batteries!

★★★★★

# LED masks

## *Save*

### Magnitone London GetLit Tri Colour LED Face Mask

LED light therapy uses concentrated light from the visible light spectrum – or rainbow – with each shade offering a different benefit. This affordable option offers three settings: red for fine lines, yellow for a boosting glow, and blue to target blemishes. It is advised to wear the mask for four sessions, four times a week, for the first month, and then 1-2 times a week to maintain results. Each session lasts up to 15 minutes, so it is quite a commitment. However, after using the mask on the red-light mode for four weeks, we felt that our fine lines were less visible, particularly those around the lip area. It doesn't provide dramatic or instant results, but it is a decent stepping stone for those looking to invest.

£75

★★★★☆

VS

## *Splurge*

### Shark CryoGlow Under-Eye Cooling & LED Anti-Ageing & Blemish Repair Mask

Thanks to its impressive credentials, Shark's latest innovation has gone viral since its launch. It was easy to set up with clear instructions, and the adjustable straps made for a good fit. The mask did feel a little claustrophobic at first, but after regular wear it became more comfortable. There are four different functions including a 'Better Ageing' mode – a six-minute programme that noticeably reduces the appearance of wrinkles. However, the standout feature is the 'Under-Eye Cooling' mode, which helps to soothe puffy eyes in the morning. The skin-cooling technology is a little noisy, but it is well worth it for the results. Not the cheapest option, but the outcome is very impressive!

£299

★★★★★

# Microcurrent massager

## *Save*

### StylPro Mini Microcurrent Device

While small, this handy piece of tech packs a punch, with three intensity levels that can be increased over time. You'll need to charge it using the USB cable provided, but the battery will last for over six weeks. Next, apply a suitable serum or oil and get to work! Using this tool does take a bit of getting used to and can feel strange around the mouth, so we recommend using a softer setting for that area.

We loved how easy it was to use – we even tried it while watching the telly. The key is to apply pressure and move the device in upward strokes. Our skin was left slightly red after each use, which indicated that this budget option was working some magic, but the results weren't hugely visible.

£29.99

★★★☆☆

VS

## *Splurge*

### Geske SmartAppGuided MicroCurrent Face Lifter

Before you get going you'll need to download Geske's phone app via a QR code. Registration is simple, and worth it, as it walks you through a face scan to identity any areas with dark circles or wrinkles – the accuracy was surprisingly good! The app also features video demos. This tool has five different modes, depending on how intense you prefer the vibrations. Simply apply the Hydrating MicroCurrent Gel that comes with the product to provide a clean glide across your skin. The device itself feels cool on the face and, after a few weeks of using it, the area around our cheeks felt lifted and our overall complexion had a more youthful glow. The only drawback is that it doesn't come with a storage pouch to keep it clean.

£49.95

★★★★☆

**By** Cigdem Tanrioglu & Phoebe Denman, **Pictures** Getty

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**Helen Danso grew up believing her mum had abandoned her, until her dad revealed he'd kidnapped her from their home in Ghana and brought her to the UK. After his death, Helen finally spoke to her mother, who'd spent years trying to find her. Sadly, her mum died before they could meet, but Helen forged an amazing connection with the family she'd been stolen from.**

Helen used The Story People to share her family reunion story, and you can too.

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# Best of the rest...

Upgrade your skincare routine with *Bella*'s top-rated beauty tech

## *Bright eyed*

The skin around our eyes is thinner and therefore requires specialist technology to prevent further damage. This next-gen wand uses a combination of gentle heat and LED lighting to soothe tired eyes, while boosting elasticity around the wrinkle-prone area. **Peep Club at Victoria Health Heated Eye Wand LED+, £85**

## *Sculpt & define*

This traditional Chinese tool is highly rated for its ability to boost circulation and drain excess fluids for a more defined look. Simply apply your favourite serum or oil before smoothing the tool over your skin in a smooth upward motion. **Sephora Collection Rose Quartz Gua Sha Tool, £17.99**

## *Targeted treatment*

Small but mighty, this corrector uses medical-grade red light to boost your skin's repairing ability and encourage collagen production, minimising hyperpigmentation and fine lines. The hands-free option comes with skin-safe adhesive patches to keep it in place. **Omnilux Mini Skin Corrector, £96**

## *Firm favourite*

Microneedling uses tiny needles to stimulate collagen production, for plumper-looking skin that feels firmer. Gently roll it over clean skin before applying a hydrating serum. Just be sure to disinfect your tool after each use to avoid infections. **Trinny London Plump Up Microneedle, £49**

## *Good vibrations*

For a double dose of anti-ageing results, apply a serum or cream and massage this vibrating bar over skin in a soft, upward motion. The combination of the massage and ultra-fast pulsations will reduce puffiness and buff away dead skin cells. **Beautypro T-Bar Sonic Vibrating Anti-Ageing Device, £39**

## *Treat chests*

This innovative wand uses microcurrent technology to boost circulation around the neck and décolletage, minimising drooping and preventing 'turkey neck'. For best results, apply a generous amount of serum and massage skin in upwards motions, taking time to focus on any wrinkles. **PRAI Ageless Throat & Decolletage Ionic Microcurrent Device, £54**

## *Precious gems*

For a cooling massage, look no further than a humble jade roller. Typically, there are two rollers that help to relax and de-puff your complexion. We find it works best in the evening, as the rolling motion enhances the absorption of rich night creams. **Botanics Dual Ended Textured Jade Roller, £12**

## *Multipurpose wonder*

This splurge-worthy device offers a plethora of rejuvenating tech, such as radiofrequency to tighten, electrical muscle stimulation to lift and tone and LED to brighten. The brand's app offers easy-to-follow videos for those salon-worthy results. **Sensse Firmify Skin Health, £139**

By Cigdem Tanrioglu

# *Celeb Approve*

## *Helen Mirren*

When it comes to setting her hairstyles and taming unruly strands, the 79-year-old swears by this classic hairspray – she even carries a mini version in her handbag! 'It's a real old favourite,' she says, 'every hairdresser uses it.'

**L'Oréal Paris Elnett hairspray, £8.25**

## *Claudia Winkleman*

Want to know the secret to the *Strictly* presenter's glossy locks? It's all down to this bargain shampoo and conditioner pairing. 'I've always used it and I love it,' says the 53-year-old. 'It doesn't make my hair flyaway or weigh it down.' We're sold!

**Head & Shoulders Suprême Repair Shampoo & Conditioner, £5 each**

## *Rosie Huntington-Whiteley*

'Klorane Dry Shampoo is always in my cabinet,' claims the 37-year-old model, and it's easy to see why. Enriched with hydrating oat milk and nourishing vitamins, it soaks up grease and oils without causing irritation.

**Klorane Extra-Gentle Dry Shampoo with Oat and Ceramide, £16**

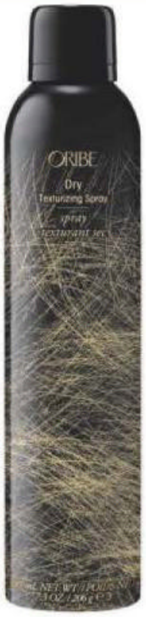
## *Davina McCall*

There's no need to splash out at the salon thanks to Davina's DIY favourite – yes that's right, the 57-year-old dyes her hair at home! 'People don't believe it, but I know it's true because I've been doing her hair for so long – she doesn't let me do it,' explains the presenter's partner and hairstylist, Michael Douglas.

**Garnier Nutrisse Permanent Hair Dye, £8**

# Haircare

Get red-carpet worthy locks with these A-list buys



## Meghan Markle

There's a reason the Duchess's hair never looks lifeless – and it's all down to this lightweight, texturising spray that she used when filming *Suits*. The 43-year-old royal explains, 'When my hair is feeling weighted, my hair artist sprays a little to give it extra bounce.' **Oribe Dry Texturizing Spray from £22**

## Oprah Winfrey

Treat damaged hair with Oprah's go-to repairing mask. 'It fortifies strands, adds moisture, and helps with porosity,' explains the 71-year-old's hair stylist. Simply apply to wet hair and shampoo thoroughly 20 minutes later. **Olaplex No. 3 Hair Perfector Pre-shampoo Hair Repair Treatment, from £28**

## Nicole Kidman

Curly and coloured hair like Nicole's can require a little extra TLC, which is where this multi-purpose oil comes in. Whenever she is on camera, the 57-year-old's hair stylist applies a few drops to hydrate and smooth strands. **Virtue Healing Oil, from £20**

## Jennifer Lopez

You can always rely on J.Lo, 55, to bring the glamour to a Hollywood event and, luckily, we can get that look at home thanks to her hair stylist's choice of volumising product. Apply a small amount of the foam to your roots and blow dry for plenty of oomph. **Color Wow Xtra Large Bombshell Volumizer, £35**

By Cigdem Tanrioglu, **Pictures** Getty Images, Imago

# THE STRESS-BUSTING DIET PLAN

## How keeping calm can help you lose weight

Cortisol, our body's main stress hormone, helps maintain constant blood pressure and blood glucose levels, regulate immune function and anti-inflammatory mechanisms. But, as with most things in life, you can have too much of a good thing. Our brains and bodies can sadly misinterpret the rigours of a stressful lifestyle as the need to keep pumping out more and more cortisol – and that can be bad news for your waistline and your health.

The good news is, with some simple clever tweaks, you can get your cortisol re-balanced.

Angela Dowden

## Why cortisol can make you gain weight

'Women often run into cortisol imbalances because, frankly, we're juggling a lot: work, family, social life, finances etc. This constant pressure, often teamed with too little sleep and less-than-ideal diets, can send our stress levels through the roof, and stress is the big driver of cortisol,' explains registered nutritionist Angela Dowden, author of the brilliant new book *The Cortisol Fix Recipe Book*. She tells us, 'Biologically, women also go through hormonal shifts – menstrual cycles, pregnancy and menopause – that can mess with the HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal) axis, the system that controls cortisol. When stress keeps triggering that axis, cortisol can stay elevated, or other imbalances creep in.'

The result? 'When cortisol's out of whack it revs up your appetite, especially for sugary or fatty comfort foods, because your body is looking for quick energy to deal with the stress. This can lead to weight gain, particularly around the middle, because cortisol loves to direct fat there.'

And, as if that wasn't enough, unbalanced cortisol can also mess with your metabolism, making blood sugar control harder, and suppress your immune system, leaving you more prone to inflammation and getting sick. It can also amplify PMS, fatigue and mood swings.

This two-step plan can help you lower your stress, get slimmer and healthier.

## Step 1 Balancing food changes

Angela says healthy cortisol follows a circadian pattern – highest in the morning, lowest at night. However, micro-stressors cause surges that can be exacerbated by poor eating habits. To help smooth out this roller-coaster and get your cortisol responses healthier overall, try the following.

**● DON'T SKIP CARBS**
This is a common mistake for managing stress and cortisol. Eating more wholegrains as part of a healthy diet can damp down

inflammation, which can help reduce the constant cortisol demand (see the next point). The fibre in minimally processed carbs such as wholegrains, pulses and oats also nourish your gut bacteria, and we now know there's a link between a robust gut microbiome and increased stress resilience. It's only sugary snacks or processed (white) carbs that need to be minimised as they can create excessive blood sugar fluctuations (especially when not eaten with a meal). If you fancy something sweet, opt for a pudding of fruit salad with a large spoonful of yogurt, or a few squares of 70% dark chocolate.

**● ENJOY ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS**

These help cortisol levels decline as then there is less work for this hormone (which works to damp down inflammation) to do. Go for low GI and high-fibre foods, and foods low in saturated fat and trans fatty acids. Have plenty of fruit and vegetables (aim for two to three palmfuls of non-starchy veg at each meal), lean proteins, and healthy fats such as salmon, nuts and olive oil. Also cut down on booze.

**● BALANCE YOUR CAFFEINE INTAKE**

Caffeine can increase cortisol levels, but there's generally no need to give it up altogether, especially as tea and coffee can have brain-boosting and cardiovascular benefits. Instead, reduce to around two cups a day, ideally in the morning.

**● GET STRESS-SUPPORTIVE AND CORTISOL-LOWERING NUTRIENTS**

These include magnesium, omega-3s and flavanols. Good sources of magnesium are almonds, Brazil nuts, pulses, green leafy veg and wholegrains. Get omega-3s from oily fish such as salmon, trout, mackerel and sardines, aiming for at least two portions a week. Flavanols are found in fruit, veg and pulses, and green tea (we only need two and a half cups of green tea a day to get the beneficial dose of 500mg).

See Angela's recipes over the page on how to easily pull this all together.

## Step 2 Lifestyle stress-busting solutions

A balanced exercise and sleep routine can also make a huge difference.

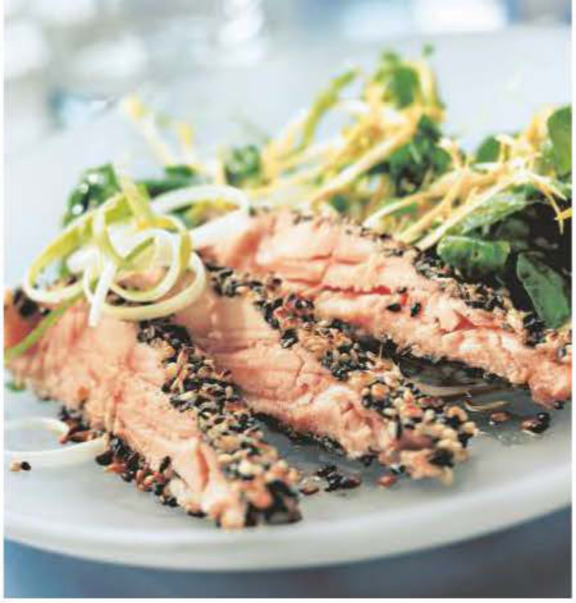
**● EXERCISE WISELY**

'Gentle, consistent movements like walking can help lower cortisol levels by giving you a healthy outlet to stress,' says Angela. Vigorous cardio exercise, like running or spin classes, can give a short-term spike in cortisol, but improves cortisol response to later stress events, so these are best done in the morning. Stick to relaxing exercises, like yoga, in the evening.

**● CARVE OUT DAILY MOMENTS TO DE-STRESS**

Try deep breathing or a laugh with a friend.

Continued over the page...



By Julia Smurthwaite, **Pictures** Getty, Shutterstock, William Reavell, William Shaw, Philip Webb

### GET SLEEP CONSISTENCY

'Sleep is huge. Since cortisol is tied to your sleep-wake cycle, aim for a consistent bedtime to let those levels drop naturally at night. If you're up late, stressed out, your HPA axis keeps pumping cortisol, and that's a recipe for imbalance, and an increased chance of early waking,' advises Angela.

To help combat the dreaded 4am racing brain, try dimming lights and avoiding screens an hour before bed to encourage melatonin production, which helps counterbalance cortisol. Managing evening stress with relaxation techniques, such as using a meditation app or a warm bath, can also help you wind down.

## Eat the cortisol-busting way

Here are two days' worth of nutrient-rich, simple and satisfying recipes from Angela's book for you to enjoy.

## Day 1

### Breakfast

**Potato farls with mushrooms and egg**

*Serves 2*

*Heat 1tbsp olive oil with 25g unsalted butter in a frying pan over a high heat. Reduce the heat slightly; add 2 shallots, finely chopped, and 250g mixed mushrooms, trimmed and sliced; and fry for 6min, stirring occasionally. Stir in 2 garlic cloves, chopped, and cook, stirring, for 1min. Add 1tbsp lemon juice and season. Remove from the heat and stir in 2tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley. Keep warm while you poach 2 large eggs – half-fill a separate frying pan with water and bring to a simmer. Break in 2 large eggs and cook for 3min. Put 2 ready-made potato farls, toasted, on each plate, and top with the mushroom mixture and an egg each. Sprinkle with 1tbsp chopped chives.*

### Lunch

**Mackerel or tuna salad salsa pitta**

*Fill a wholemeal pitta with a tin of canned mackerel or tuna, broken up with a fork, and cherry tomatoes, spinach and salsa.*

### Afternoon snack

*A handful of almonds with 2 satsumas.*

### Dinner

**Chicken with spinach and ricotta**

*Serves 4*

*Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6. Make a long horizontal slit through the thickest part of 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast (about 125g each), without cutting right through. Crumble 125g ricotta cheese into a bowl. Chop 125g cooked spinach, squeezed dry, and mix into the ricotta with ¼tsp grated nutmeg. Season. Divide the stuffing between the slits and wrap each breast in 2 pieces of Parma ham, winding it around to totally cover the chicken. Heat 2tbsp olive oil in a shallow ovenproof pan, add the chicken and cook for 4min each side, or until the ham starts to brown. Transfer to the oven and cook for 15min. Serve with lemon wedges and rocket leaves drizzled with a little olive oil.*

## Day 2

### Breakfast

*A slice of seeded wholegrain bread spread with nut butter. A small bowl of natural yogurt topped with a handful of berries.*

### Lunch

**Sesame-crusted salmon salad**

*Serves 4*

*Cut 4 spring onions into thin strips and place in cold water. Lightly beat 2 egg whites. Mix 1tbsp each of white and black sesame seeds, with a pinch of salt and pepper, on a large plate. Dip a 500g salmon fillet in the egg whites, then roll it in the sesame seeds to evenly coat. Heat a griddle pan, add the salmon and cook for 5min each side. Make a salad dressing by mixing together 3tbsp white wine vinegar, 5tbsp olive oil, 1tbsp sesame oil, 1tbsp soy sauce, 1tsp caster sugar and a bunch of chives, finely chopped. Toss 1 curly-leaved endive, that's been divided into leaves, and 2 bunches of watercress, in the dressing. Arrange on a large serving dish. Finely slice the salmon fillet and place on the dish. Drain the spring onion curls, dry on kitchen paper and sprinkle over.*

### Afternoon snack

*A handful of olives and a few squares of feta.*

### Dinner

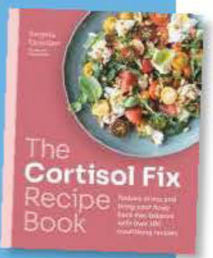
**Chickpea and aubergine tagine**

*Serves 4*

*Heat 1tbsp sunflower oil in a large saucepan, add 1 large onion, sliced; 2 garlic cloves, crushed, and cook over a medium heat for 5min. Stir in 1tsp ground cumin, 1tsp ground cinnamon, 1tsp ground turmeric, 1tsp ground paprika and cook, stirring, for 1min. Add 2 aubergines, chopped into 3.5cm chunks, and cook for 5min. Stir in 2 carrots, sliced; 125g ready-to-eat dried dates; 400g can chopped tomatoes; 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed; 600ml vegetable stock and 4 slices of preserved lemon. Season, bring to the boil, reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 30min, stirring occasionally. Stir in 2tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley. Serve with couscous. For 4 people cook 280g (uncooked weight) couscous, according to packet instructions.*

*For more delicious recipes check out Angela's book. See our competition below.*

## WIN THE BOOK!



***The Cortisol Fix Recipe Book*** **by Angela Dowden (Hamlyn, £18.99) contains cortisol-reduction information, and 100 nourishing recipes, to lower your stress levels and bring your body back into balance. It even includes desserts that can be part of an overall balanced diet, plus a four-week plan to take the guesswork out. We've got six copies up for grabs. For your chance to win one please enter at bellamagazine.co.uk/competitions by 3 June 2025.**

NB. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, under 18 or have a medical condition please seek professional advice before changing your diet.

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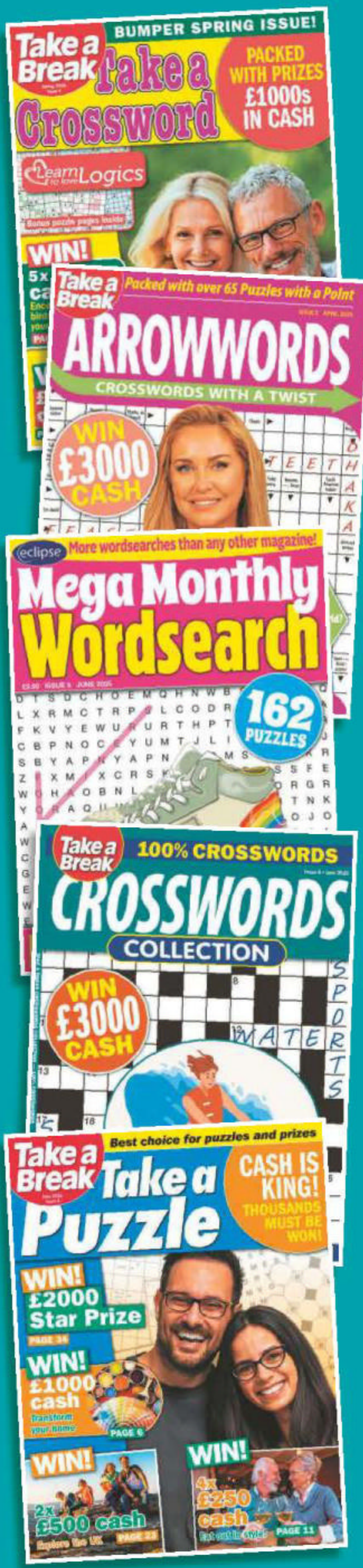
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# Simple healthy eating

Your body will love these easy, tasty dishes from nutritionist Emily English

## Tikka cod with caramelised onion

*Serves 2 Takes 45min, plus marinating*

- 2 skinless cod fillets
- Salt and pepper

**FOR THE MARINADE**

- 2tbsp Greek yogurt (ideally full fat)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1tsp ginger paste
- 1tsp garlic paste
- 1tsp garam masala
- 1tsp mango chutney
- 1tsp tomato purée

**FOR THE CARAMELISED ONION RICE**

- 2tsp olive oil
- 2 red onions, finely sliced
- 1tbsp mango chutney
- 1tbsp garam masala
- 1tbsp tomato purée
- 80g frozen peas
- ½ x 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 250g precooked rice
- Handful of baby spinach leaves

**FOR THE RAITA**

- 150g Greek yogurt (ideally full fat)
- 2tbsp chopped coriander leaves
- 1tbsp chopped mint leaves
- Juice of ½ lemon

**1** *In a small bowl, mix together the marinade ingredients, with salt and pepper to taste. Coat the cod fillets in the marinade and let them sit for at least 30min.*

**2** *Preheat the oven to 220°C/fan 200°C fan or the air fryer to 200°C. In a large pan, heat the olive oil over a medium heat. Add the red onion and mango chutney and cook until caramelised, about 10-15min, adding a splash of water if they start to catch on the bottom of the pan. Stir in the garam masala and tomato purée and cook for another 2min until aromatic.*

**3** *Add the frozen peas and chickpeas and saute for about 3mins, until everything is heated, then add the precooked rice and spinach, mix until coated and cook for a final few min until the rice is hot and the spinach wilted.*

**4** *Place the marinated cod fillets on a baking sheet and bake in the oven for 10-15min, or in the air fryer for 12-15min, until cooked through and the cod flakes easily with a fork.*

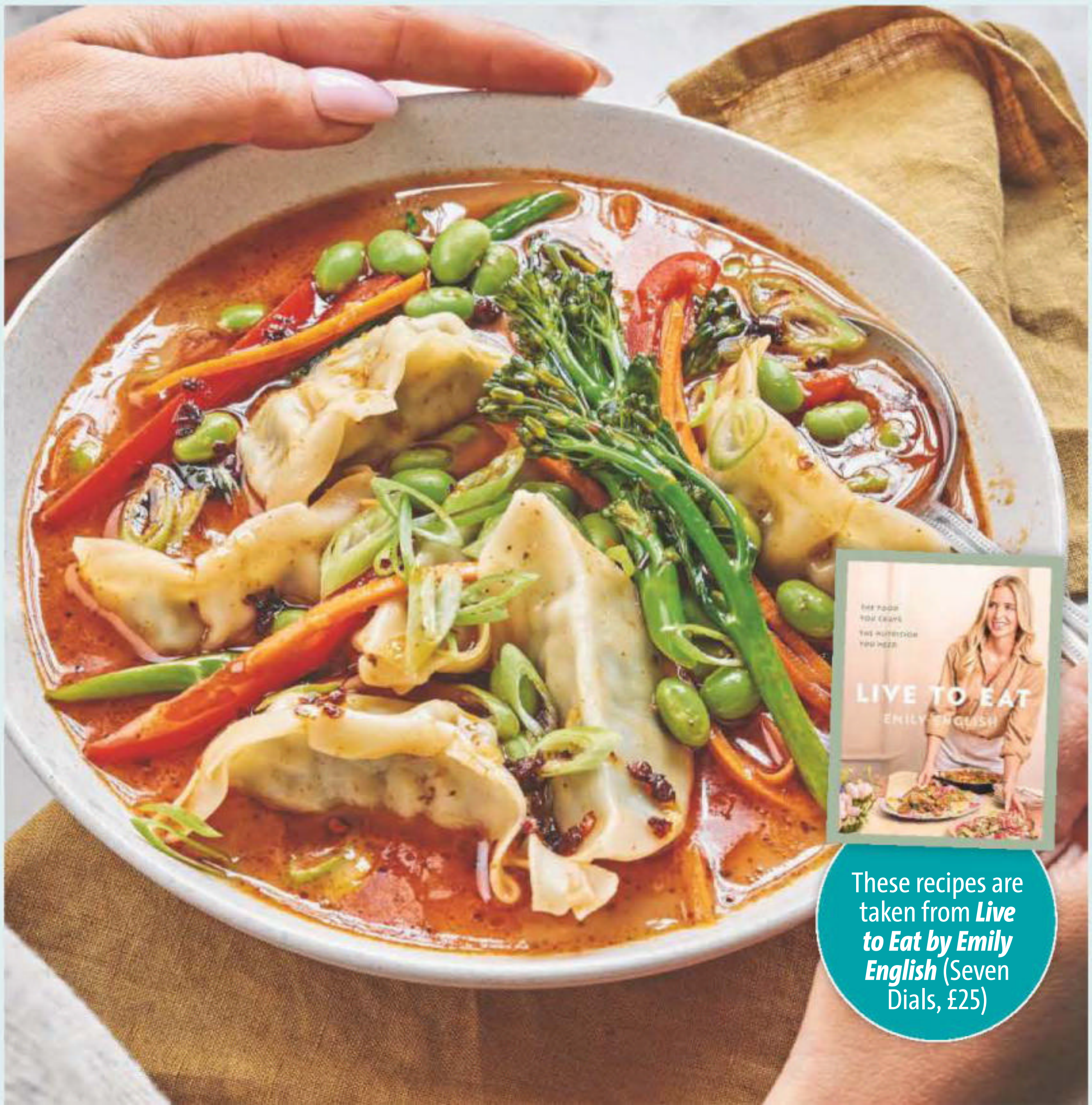
**5** *Meanwhile, mix the raita ingredients, with salt and pepper to taste, in a small bowl. Place a generous portion of the caramelised onion rice on each plate. Top with the cod fillet and a dollop of mint raita. Serve with a side of greens, if desired.*

# Salmon & spinach filo cottage cheese quiche

*Serves* *6* *Takes* *1hr 15min, plus cooling*

- **Spray oil, for greasing**
- **300g cottage cheese**
- **100ml milk**
- **5 medium free-range eggs**
- **100g baby spinach leaves, wilted and chopped**
- **10g chopped chives**
- **100g smoked salmon, chopped**
- **Zest of 1 lemon**
- **Salt and pepper**
- **4 sheets of filo pastry, each cut in half**
- **50g feta cheese, crumbled**

**1** *Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C. Lightly spray a 20cm deep springform cake tin with oil.*
**2** *In a blender or food processor, blend the cottage cheese with the milk until smooth. Transfer to a large mixing bowl. Add the eggs to the bowl and whisk until well combined. Stir in the spinach, chives, smoked salmon, lemon zest and salt and pepper to taste. Mix until all the ingredients are evenly distributed.*
**3** *Layer the halved filo sheets into the oiled cake tin, spraying each sheet lightly with oil as you go. Ensure the sheets are layered evenly to form a sturdy crust, overlapping to cover any gaps.*
**4** *Pour the cottage cheese mixture into the prepared filo crust. Tuck the edges of the filo back in on themselves to create a neat edge – don't worry about it being perfect. Sprinkle the crumbled feta evenly over the top of the filling. Bake in the oven for 1hr, or until the filling is just set. It will continue to set as it cools, so allow the quiche to cool slightly before serving. This also makes it easier to slice.*



These recipes are taken from ***Live to Eat by Emily English*** (Seven Dials, £25)

# Thai red coconut gyoza soup

*Serves* *1* *Takes* *18-20min*

- **1tbsp Thai red curry paste**
- **1-2tbsp light soy sauce, plus extra if needed**
- **1tsp ginger paste**
- **150ml coconut milk (light or full fat)**
- **1tbsp fish sauce**
- **6 gyoza (choose your favourite flavour)**
- **1 small carrot, peeled and julienned**
- **A few spears of Tenderstem broccoli cut into bite-sized pieces**
- **½ red pepper, deseeded and sliced**
- **1 large spring onion, sliced**
- **1tsp chilli oil, to serve (optional)**

**1** *In a deep pan, combine the curry paste, soy sauce, ginger paste, coconut milk and 150ml water. Bring to a gentle simmer, season with the fish sauce and simmer for 5min.*
**2** *Add the gyoza, carrot, broccoli, red pepper and spring onion (reserving some to garnish). Simmer until the gyoza are cooked and the vegetables are tender but still vibrant and crisp, about 5-7min. Taste and season with more soy sauce if needed.*
**3** *Pour into a serving bowl, drizzle with crispy chilli oil if desired, and garnish with the reserved spring onion.*

**By** Hayley Merrick **Recipes** Emily English **Pictures** Clare Winfield

# Wande

## Welcome to Miami

Create a colourful vibrant tone in your home with neon shades and quirky finds. It's the perfect combination for a fun-loving sitting room.

Statement walls are a must

**Grid cushion,** £12; **Lucky Me cushion,** £10; **dice,** £14; **flower table,** £35; **prints,** £12 for two; **rugs** from £30, all George Home at Asda

## African influence

Earthy tones and rustic accessories will help recreate the natural African surroundings. Add a splash of salmon or burnt orange for a reminder of those stunning sunsets.

**Fire diffuser,** Nutmeg at Morrisons, £6

**Blown glass vase,** B&M, £5

**Tribal collection tray,** B&M, £8

**Reactive mug,** Marks & Spencer, £5

**Solar lantern string lights,** Joe Browns, £30

**Yellow banana bookends,** Next, £40

**Margarita glasses,** Oliver Bonas, £19.50 for two

**Shake It Off bathmat,** Next, £18

**Stripe jug,** John Lewis, £35

**Rope shade,** £10; **sketch wall art,** £7; **ribbed vase,** £10; **Hebden blue stripe double duvet set,** £15; **ruffle cushion,** £10; **loop cushion,** £10, all B&M

# rlust

Inspired by far- flung destinations, bring holiday vibes into your home

**Grinsbol mirror,** Ikea, £25

**Hammered tumbler glasses, £20** for four; **Newark chairs, £299** for two; **cereal bowls, £12** for four; **dinner plates, £15** for four; **cake stand, £15**; **place mats, £15** for four; **linen tablecloth, £25**; **napkins, £10** for two, all Marks & Spencer

Go for textured accessories for impact

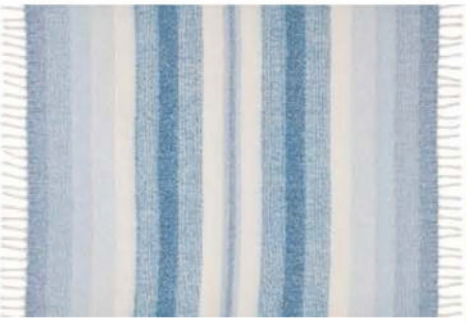
## Grecian escape

Take inspiration from cool white walls, soft shades of blue and light wood accessories and with a Greek-inspired bedroom.

Try tones of blue for effect

**Glaze dip bowl,** Nutmeg at Morrisons, **£2**

**Greek village poster,** Poster Store, **£15.95**



**Ortonby throw,** Laura Ashley, **£36**

**Rippel lamp,** B&M, **£20**

**Wonderful wanderlust reversible cotton duvet set,** Joe Browns, from **£50** for a double

## Thai Style

Bring the elegance of the Far East into your home through bedding and fabulous accessories with bright jewel shades and intricate patterns.

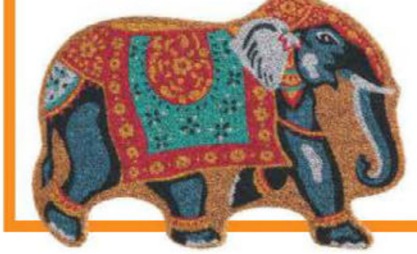
**Outdoor monkey cushion,** Marks & Spencer, **£25** for two

**Boho dinner plates,** Marks & Spencer, **£15** for four

Colour clashing is key

**Bella Utopia chair,** Dunelm, **£159**

**Elephant reversible cushion,** Joe Browns, **£26**



**Elephant doormat,** Joe Browns, **£18**

By Zoe Bishop

tried & tested

Whether you're a frequent flyer or on a weekend getaway, a good cabin case is essential

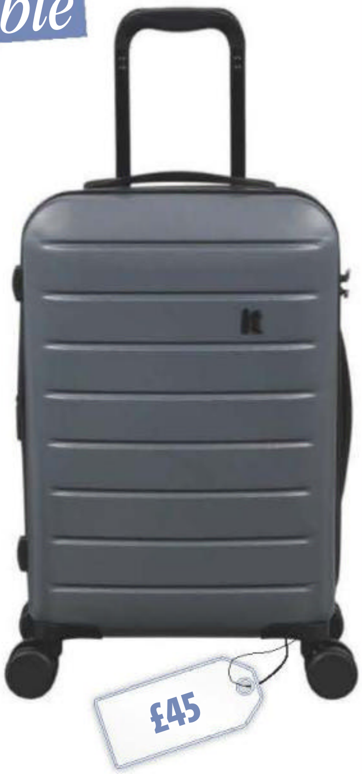
# TRAVELLING LIGHT

## Best expandable

### IT Cabin Luggage Legion

When it comes to carry-ons, we've found that some brands are guilty of sacrificing practicality for aesthetics. This case from IT Luggage succeeded impressively on both fronts. We love its stylish aesthetic, capacity and value.

We've now tested this bag three times, and each time we we're impressed by its surprisingly spacious interior – easily enough room for packing essentials for four-to-five days. If you tend to overpack or plan to do some retail therapy during your travels, the expandable zippered section unveils an extra inch of depth, which gave us wiggle room to fit shopping and souvenirs we wanted to take home. If you need an affordable suitcase that checks all the boxes, this one's a no-brainer.



★★★★☆

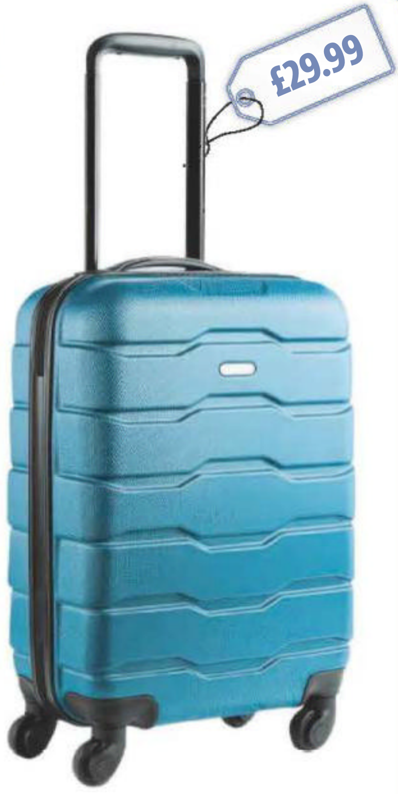
**itluggage.com**

## Best budget

### ABS Teal Cabin Bag

Coming in at under £30, this case is ideal for those looking for a budget cabin bag. The hard shell is sturdy but lightweight, and the size makes it perfect for the cabin requirements of airlines including easyJet and Jet 2. We liked that it had a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) approved lock on the side. However, for it to work, the zips had to be lined up perfectly, which took some effort – but for such an affordable case, this really wasn't an issue.

We love the vibrant bright blue colour. It really stands out, so your case is always easy to spot in a busy airport. Overall, this budget-friendly choice is impressive. It looks sleek, feels hard-wearing and is the perfect size for short getaways.



★★★★☆

**vonhaus.com**

## Best high end

### Away Executive Carry On

This is a sleek and practical cabin case. Its expandable design offers additional packing space when needed – ideal for overpackers. The standout feature of the case is the handy front pocket, which provides easy access to travel essentials such as documents or electronics. This was a real game changer!

The interior of the case is really practical, with multiple compartments, compression straps, and a removable laundry bag to keep belongings organised. We also loved the smooth 360° spinner wheels that made it a breeze to move around the airport. At nearly £300, this isn't a cheap option, but for frequent travellers it's a great investment, as it comes with a lifetime warranty.

★★★★☆

● **awaytravel.com**

## Best lightweight

### Helly Hansen Sport Expedition-Carry On

The first thing we noticed about this case was how lightweight it was. It's a soft-fabric case, which is something we were initially hesitant about, as we usually prefer hard shell. However, the material is really durable and is definitely the reason it's so easy to lift.

Manoeuvring was effortless, as the wheels moved smoothly and quietly, even on bumpy terrains. The internal mesh dividers made packing a breeze, and the optional lockable zipper on the main compartment protected all our belongings. Despite being compact in size, we were able pack lots into it – enough for about four days away. However the slight issue with this case is that if it's packed too full and the weight isn't evenly distributed, it does have a tendency to topple over – so be careful.

£180
HH
HELLY HANSEN

★★★☆☆

● **hellyhansen.com**

## Best large cabin case

### Antler Large Cabin Suitcase

This super-stylish large cabin case certainly looks the part. We are keen overpackers and struggle to pack lightly, so this generously sized case appealed to us straight away. It's sleek in design but offers much more space than a regular sized case, making it ideal for a long weekend away.

We used it for a one-night trip for two people and were impressed with just how much we could fit in. The inside of the case has a good selection of pockets and dividers, so everything stayed tidy with minimal creasing. It has spinner-style wheels, making it easy to manoeuvre, and is lightweight, so easy to lift even when it was packed full to the brim! The only thing to note is that it may be too big for some airlines, so worth checking before you fly.

★★★★★

● **antler.co.uk**

## Best design

### OHS 4 Wheel Hard Shell Cabin Suitcase

This cabin case has a durable hard shell with a sleek-but-subtle geometric design. The inside is really spacious, so you'll have plenty of room for everything you need. It's the perfect size for a weekend getaway – we packed clothes for a few days and a pair of shoes into the case easily. The four wheels have a 360° rotation, making it easy to move, and the handles on the top and side are very cushioned and comfortable. There are compression straps and a zip compartment inside for practical storage. The only slight disadvantage with this case was that it didn't come with a built-in lock, which many others do for a similar price.

★★★★☆

● **onlinehomeshop.com**

**By** Lucy Brown. **Pictures:** Shutterstock

THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS

# CRIME MONTHLY

TRURO MURDERS: SERIAL KILLER SLAYS 7 WOMEN
ZIZIAN CULT HORROR: LEADER FINALLY ARRESTED AFTER 6 HOMICIDES
ABUSE SCANDAL: YOUTUBE MUM WHO BECAME A MONSTER
ISSUE 75
MAY 2025
CRIME MONTHLY
THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS
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HUSBAND FROM HELL
EVIL DOCTOR PUSHES WIFE OFF A CLIFF
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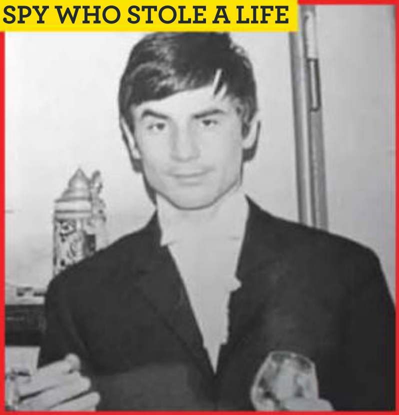

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Star letter

## Blast from the past

How incredible does Jenny Powell look? I loved reading your interview with her (issue 18). She was always such a wonderfully warm person, and it's so nice to see that she's still out and about doing her thing – and looking so good as she approaches 60! There's hope for us all!

**Alex Amber,** Tenby

## Euro-love

I was so pleased to see your Eurovision preview (issue 18) – I'd totally forgotten it was on and always love it when I watch it! When I looked into it, I read about our entry Remember Monday and listened to their song – I love it! No matter where they place on the leader board, we can rest assured they did their best as they are such good singers.

**Christina Roberts,** Oxford

## Talking point

A woman online caused outrage when she said her boyfriend should work harder so he could buy her a big ring. So, we ask, should you demand an expensive engagement ring?

The world is far too materialistic, what a ridiculous thing to 'demand' of anyone. Love is an expression of your inner feelings, not your outward bank balance.
**Freya Newton,** via Facebook

I think an engagement ring could be made of tin for all I care – it's the thought that counts.
**Kat Rawlings,** via Facebook

'Demanding' something in exchange for a marriage seems like a rocky start to me!
**Georgia Barrett,** via Facebook

While it is nice to have something sparkly on your finger, I really don't think people should get into debt over it.
**Rowena Smith,** via Facebook

**Pictures** Shutterstock, Instagram

## THIS WEEK Bella LOVES...

### Beyond Meat

It's National BBQ Week from 26 May, and just in time: plant-based Beyond Meat have released an absolutely sizzling jalapeno patty that you will want to have in heavy rotation this summer. Fiery, juicy and completely meat free, they are so much like the real thing we'd be surprised if people even knew they weren't eating like a carnivore! Available now at supermarkets nationwide

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# Dear Kate...

Counsellor Kate Medlin answers your personal, sexual and emotional problems

## Should I get back with him?

**Q I lost my husband unexpectedly a few years ago. Four years on, I spend time with my friends, work as a volunteer and keep myself busy. I met a man around my age (70s) about a year ago who had also lost his partner. We were both grieving for the people we loved. For eight months we had a passionate and fun, but sometimes difficult, time. I felt disloyal to my husband although I think he'd be happy for me. I found him picky about little things and he was often critical, which I found difficult. Things got to the extent where I felt he was disrespectful so I finished it. Next day he apologised and I then regretted it. He's phoned a few times, but we haven't reconciled yet and I don't know if we will. I think I want to but then I worry it will happen again. My husband was a hard act to follow but it's been nice to be desired and have someone take an interest in me although I was fine on my own. I'm so confused and upset – it seems like another loss and I don't think I can take any more.**

A No one but you can decide whether this relationship is right or wrong for you, but I can certainly help you to find ways that will allow you to make the choice for yourself. Firstly, do you believe that he knows what he was apologising for? Was he really able to understand what he'd done that didn't feel nice? Is he able to explain or even think about why he sometimes reacts the way he does? People who are critical of others often feel insecure about themselves. They attack because something has made them feel under attack themselves. So, it's worth trying to understand where he's coming from. In your unedited letter, you say that he snaps at you when you ask what he's been up to. This sounds like a perfectly innocent question and, as you say,

## How do I get over my divorce?

**Q My husband and I are working our way through a fairly amicable divorce. The children have all flown the nest and we wanted different things from post-family life. He moved out about a month ago and, since then, I've been feeling totally lost. Having spent the last 27 years together, we now have almost no reason to be in touch. And I miss that. How do people move on? The thought of dating someone else seems ridiculous. I don't think we should be together, but I don't know how to be apart.**

A Your home has changed from being a busy place filled with a family, your children, their friends and all the comings and goings that family life entails to a quiet place where everything remains just where you left it. The thing that struck me about your letter is that, while it sounds like neither you nor your husband want to be together, is there any reason you can't be friends? It may take a while to adjust, and it might feel a bit odd at first, but if things really are amicable, it is possible to move that relationship on to something different. Also, this is all very new and raw. He has only just moved out and, even though you've known it's coming, and may have even been longing for it, all change involves loss, even when it's a positive one. So give yourself time to adjust to your new normal.

## What does she really feel?

**Q My mother-in-law appears to be very supportive on the surface. However, my husband's sister says her mum often calls her to moan about how we're bringing up the children and even questions whether I'm good enough for him. She seems so on board when she's with us, but then we hear about her real feelings. Should we bring it all out in the open or keep on pretending that all is well?**

A This could be a case of you getting caught in the middle of a complicated family dynamic, maybe even sibling rivalry. Perhaps your mother-in-law moans about you as a way to bond with her daughter or she's always played her kids off against each other? Or is your sister-in-law envious of your husband's relationship with their mum and is trying to stir the pot? I'd be surprised if she's making it up, but there may be a part of her that likes hearing her mother's complaints, and then exaggerates when she relays them to you? Trusting how she is at face value is only possible if you are able to put your sister-in-law's comments

Letters and replies may be edited for length/clarity. **Pictures** Imago, Alamy

Write to **Dear Kate**,
Bella, The Lantern,
75 Hampstead Road,
London, NW1 2PL, or email
**bella.advice@bauermedia.co.uk**.

Kate will attempt to respond to as many letters as possible through her page

you're simply showing an interest. But for some reason, he seems to respond to you as if you're being noisy or even suspicious. If he's able to explain why he sometimes responds in this negative way, there is hope for you both to learn about each other, and grow the relationship. However, if he apologised without really understanding why he'd upset you, and isn't willing to think about why he reacts in that way, then it's likely that he will continue to behave like this. I also understand that you are worried about letting go of something that has at times made you feel good, especially after suffering the loss of your husband. But be careful not to put up with behaviour that upsets you just because you can't face feeling more loss. Even though the thought of giving him up is upsetting, as you know, time is a great healer, and you have plenty of people in your life who love and want the best for you.

---

aside. Bringing it out in the open may lead to a hard conversation, and you risk upsetting your sister-in-law too, but having hard conversations often leads to growth, so there are benefits too.

## BELLA ADVICE LINES

Do you suffer from anxiety?
**0906 652 5070**

Getting over depression?
**0906 652 5076**

Bereavement
**0906 652 5077**

Impotence
**0906 652 5078**

Relationship breakdown
**0906 652 5079**

Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Calls last approximately four minutes. You must be over 18 to call and have the bill payer's permission. UK SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390

# Horoscopes

By Jane Struthers For the week 20–26 May

## TAURUS
21 April – 21 May

You really mean business on the 24th, especially when it comes to making inroads with an ambition or getting ahead at work. On the 25th your mind is working so rapidly that it's hard to keep track of your fast-moving thoughts.

Theme of the week: Being different

☎ 0906 650 7231

## GEMINI
22 May – 21 June

Get ready for four weeks of action and new beginnings! Think about the ideas and plans you'd like to implement. It's a busy week but on the 23rd you enjoy relaxing. Gather your thoughts on the 26th, particularly if you're considering a long-term strategy.

Theme of the week: Dynamism

☎ 0906 650 7232

## CANCER
22 June – 23 July

You're keen to keep yourself to yourself, so try to ensure that you can do this. A useful opportunity beckons on the 24th, but it might arrive in a subtle form. You have a strong sense of responsibility from the 25th, but don't shoulder more than you can manage.

Theme of the week: Shyness

☎ 0906 650 7233

## LEO
24 July – 23 August

Tackle any problems connected with joint resources or official finances early in the week. The 24th is the perfect day for making a big impression on someone. You're on commanding form, so if you want to set firm relationship boundaries, do it now.

Theme of the week: Knowledge

☎ 0906 650 7234

## VIRGO
24 August – 23 September

You belong to a sign that's naturally modest, but this is not the right week to doubt your own strengths. Some self-promotion will be time well spent. Thinking of changing jobs or switching your career direction? Then do some in-depth research on the 24th.

Theme of the week: Quick thinking

☎ 0906 650 7235

## LIBRA
24 September – 23 October

Partnerships and teamwork are highlighted from the 25th, and that's the way it will stay for several months. Deal with any stressful phases by showing grit and determination, and by taking the long view rather than a short-term approach.

Theme of the week: Rationality

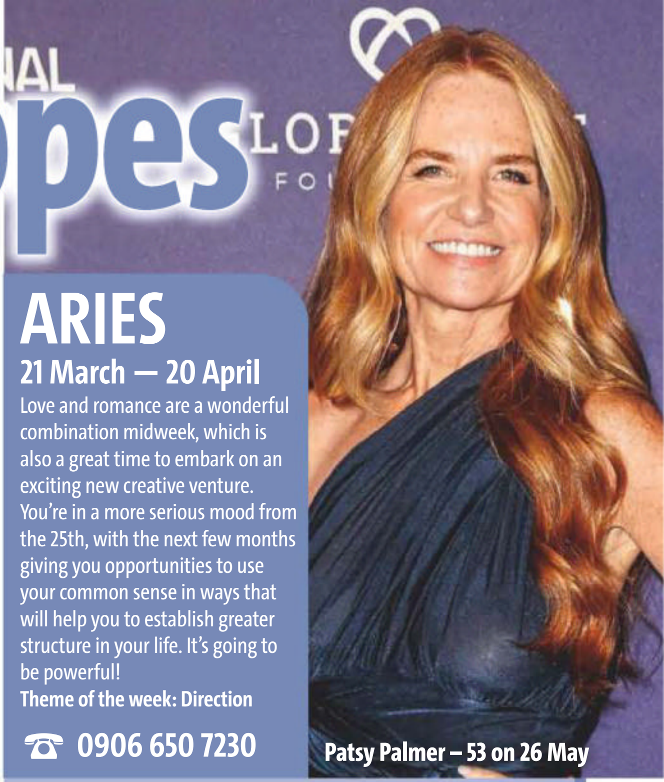
☎ 0906 650 7236

## SCORPIO
24 October – 22 November

Been having a few problems with a certain person? Early in the week is ideal to find a compromise that suits you both. On the 24th it's worth tackling something that's been bothering you, and preferably discussing it with someone who understands you.

Theme of the week: Application

☎ 0906 650 7237



Patsy Palmer – 53 on 26 May

## ARIES
21 March – 20 April

Love and romance are a wonderful combination midweek, which is also a great time to embark on an exciting new creative venture. You're in a more serious mood from the 25th, with the next few months giving you opportunities to use your common sense in ways that will help you to establish greater structure in your life. It's going to be powerful!

Theme of the week: Direction

☎ 0906 650 7230

## SAGITTARIUS
23 November – 21 December

Getting along well with others is really important to you from the start of the week. You're willing to find a happy medium with someone midweek, but avoid putting yourself down in the process. The 23rd is perfect for throwing yourself into a joyful celebration.

Theme of the week: Home truths

☎ 0906 650 7238

## CAPRICORN
22 December – 20 January

If you need to have a serious talk with you-know-who, do it in the first half of the week when your words carry extra conviction. Family and domestic matters take on increasing importance from the 25th. It's your cue to stabilise a tricky situation.

Theme of the week: Doing your duty

☎ 0906 650 7239

## AQUARIUS
21 January – 19 February

Tidy up any loose ends in your personal finances, but try to take a balanced view of them. Open your heart to a special someone on the 24th – it could transform your relationship. Weigh your words carefully from the 25th and avoid coming across as too negative.

Theme of the week: Light relief

☎ 0906 650 7240

## PISCES
20 February – 20 March

You're feeling drawn to the familiar and comforting, so this isn't the best week for breaking out of your comfort zone. Unexpressed emotions influence on the 24th, especially if you're reminded of the past. Be aware of your actions rather than let them control you.

Theme of the week: Personal responsibility

☎ 0906 650 7241

For a more detailed weekly forecast call the number for your star sign. Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Weekly forecasts last approximately four minutes. Messages are pre-recorded. For entertainment and guidance purposes only. Users must be over 18. Service provider: Spoke. Customer service number 0333 202 3390 (9am-5pm)

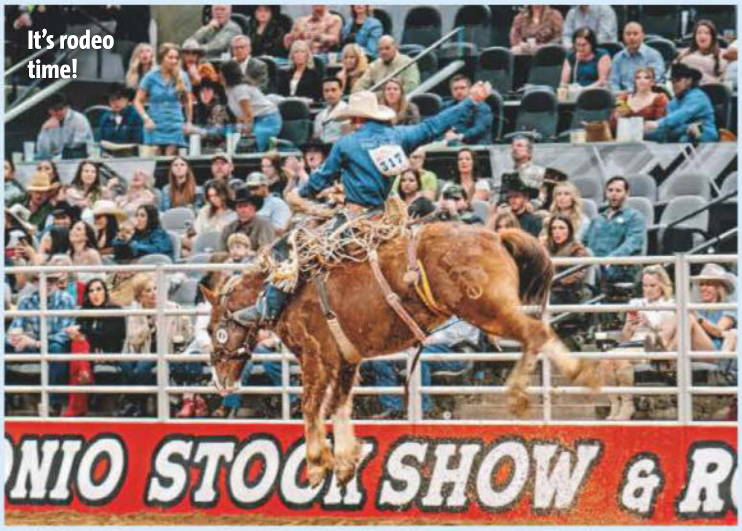
# San Antonio shines

Beyond the buzzy riverwalk, there's so much to see in Texas's second city

## Big boots, bigger vibes

They say everything's bigger in Texas and San Antonio certainly lives up to that. Home to the tallest-ever cowboy boots (yes, really), the largest Mexican market outside of Mexico, and the spiciest margaritas we've ever tasted, this is a city that lives large – in flavour, in history and in fun. Whether you're here for Rodeo Weekend or just chasing some sunshine and breakfast tacos, you'll find country cool meets cultural charm.

We were thrilled to find centuries-old missions, museums galore, riverboat rides and lively bars where locals will get you dancing. It may be Texas's second-biggest city, but when it comes to visitors, San Antonio might just be our new number one…


It's rodeo time!

## Saddle up

We landed in San Antonio just in time for Rodeo Weekend, which takes place in early February. Beyond the country stars, including music legend Keith Urban, we fully immersed ourselves into Texan hospitality, which included barrel racing, bull riding and kids clinging to sheep in a bizarre 'mutton busting' contest.

It's a great time of year to visit and in between the star-studded stage acts, we browsed boot stalls, sipped sweet tea and gawked at the cartoonishly huge turkey legs.

Then it was our turn, as we drove out to Rancho Cortez, where we saddled up for horse rides, fed longhorn cattle and enjoyed a lesson in how to 'rope' one too. Half-day visits cost $130 per person.

Tex-Mex? More like Tex-best

Cycle through centuries along the mission trails

## Explore The Alamo

You can't visit the Alamo City without seeing The Alamo, a religious outpost that is the start of San Antonio's story and free to visit year-round. A short drive south leads you to Mission San José, nicknamed the Queen of the Missions. with its grand arches, peaceful courtyards and glimpse into early colonial life. It's part of the UNESCO-listed San Antonio Missions, best explored by e-bike along the leafy trails of the Mission Reach.

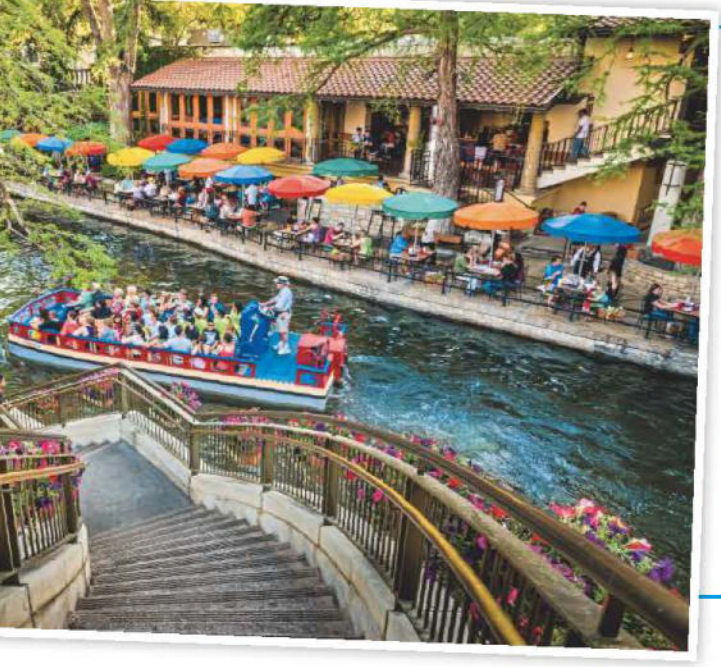
Take a free guided tour, led by descendants of the Indigenous and Spanish communities who once lived here. Then swing by the new World Heritage Centre, which dives into untold histories and honours the generations who shaped the region.

## Market magic

It's hard to overstate how enormous Mi Tierra is – a multicoloured Mexican restaurant-meets-institution that's been open for over 80 years and is a hotspot for locals and tourists alike. The smell of cinnamon, carne guisada and conchas hits you immediately. And their all-day breakfast plates? *Chef's kiss.* Make sure to leave room for a sweet treat from the on-site bakery on your way out – the Orejas were especially tasty!

Mi Tierra is part of El Mercado, the biggest Mexican market outside of Mexico, filled with papel picado, hand-painted pottery and the best churros we've ever tried. With more than 100 stalls, you'll find everything from touristy trinkets to high-end collectables.

It's always breakfast o'clock at Mi Tierra



## Foodie city

San Antonio's food scene is a vibrant reflection of its rich multicultural heritage, offering a mix of Tex-Mex, Mexican and Southern flavours. It's one of only two cities in the US designated a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. Start your day with a classic Texan breakfast: spicy tacos at Rita's on the river or indulgent croissants at La Panadería, where their tequila almond croissant is pure magic.

As the sun sets, grab a fiery margarita at the Bombay Bicycle Club, then float along the fairy-lit River Walk where mariachi bands serenade diners on boats passing by. For comfort food, Josephine Street is a local favourite serving whiskey and tender chicken-fried steak the size of your head.

## NEED TO KNOW

- America As You Like It offers a package holiday to San Antonio from £1420 per person. It includes return flights from London Heathrow with American Airlines via Dallas Fort Worth, six nights at the Intercontinental Hotel San Antonio Riverwalk and tickets to San Antonio Rodeo weekend. Book at americaasyoulikeit.com

By Emma Hawkins, **Pictures** Getty Images, Shutterstock, Visit San Antonio

# TV WEEK

## And Just Like That

**Friday 30 May, Sky Max**

The third series of the *Sex and the City* spin-off promises to bring us more drama and to-die-for fashion when it returns, exploring more about the highs and lows of dating in midlife. When we last saw Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker), she'd agreed to trying a five-year break from Aidan (John Corbett), so when we see her again, how is she finding it? Last time, Miranda (Cynthia Nixon) faced a tricky split with Che, meanwhile, Charlotte (Kristin Davis) was trying to find her place in the world outside of her family. We also catch up with Lisa (Nicole Ari Parker) and Herbert (Christopher Jackson) after their miscarriage. 'It's all those nice, big adult themes, but told with frivolity and seriousness and beautiful costumes and the city we love,' says SJP.

## THE POWER OF PARKER

**Friday 30 May, BBC1**

As the sitcom returns for a second series, it's 1992 – and it's not just the Queen who's having an 'annus horribilis'. Martin (Conleth Hill) has lost his business, and his wife Diane (Rosie Cavaliero). Since the break-up of his marriage, Martin is co-habiting with lover Kath (Sian Gibson). And to rub salt in his wounds, Kath is now running his electrical store with his arch-rival Sandy Cooper (Steve Pemberton)! 'Kath thinks if she can sort out Martin and Diane's problems, they can all live happily ever after,' says Sian, who is also the co-writer of the show. 'Unfortunately, her interfering doesn't go to plan!

## Walking With Dinosaurs

**Sunday 25 May, BBC1**

When it was first released back in 1999, this nature doc, with its groundbreaking CGI and animatronics, was true landmark TV (it was also the most expensive documentary series per minute ever made). So, there'll be lots of expectation on whether this six-part reimagining, which explores the lives of various dinosaurs in their prehistoric habitats and is narrated by *Doctor Foster* star Bertie Carvel, will make the same impact. First off, get set for a tear-jerker as an armour-plated Bambi in the shape of an orphaned baby Triceratops must use her wits to survive – especially when she's stalked by a Tyrannosaurus Rex...

**By** Cecile Metcalf, Amber Connolly and Amy Rowland

# Death Valley

**Sunday 25 May, BBC1**

Detective Sergeant Janie Mallowan (Gwyneth Keyworth) wasn't expecting to meet her childhood hero, actor John Chapel (Timothy Spall), when she took on her latest murder investigation.

But when John's skills as a fictional detective come in useful in solving the mystery, the pair form an unlikely crime-solving partnership! 'John Chapel has become a bit of a recluse ever since his wife died,' explains BAFTA-winner Timothy. 'But when Janie knocks on his door, after the death of his neighbour, they have this instant recognition. They are candid to the point of rudeness, but they have this odd reliance on each other.'

# THE LAST ANNIVERSARY

**Saturday 24 May, BBC1**

An adaptation of Liane Moriarty's best-selling novel of the same name, this six-part series is a comedy drama wrapped in a gripping mystery about family and the women who define the generations that come after them. Starring Miranda Richardson and Teresa Palmer, the story is set on Scribbly Gum Island, a place of secrets. When Sophie (Palmer) inherits a house on the island, left to her by her ex-boyfriend's great-aunt Connie, it's the fresh start she's craving, despite the unwelcome reception she receives. Single and approaching 40, Sophie is intrigued by something else Connie left her – a promise that she might finally find the man of her dreams...

# ELLIE SIMMONDS: SHOULD I HAVE CHILDREN?

**Tuesday 27 May, ITV1**

As a former Paralympian-turned-presenter, Ellie Simmonds is one of the most high-profile disabled people in the UK today. Following the BAFTA winning success of *Ellie Simmonds: Finding My Secret Family*, Ellie, who was handed over for adoption when her birth mother was told she had dwarfism, meets doctors and geneticists, frontline counsellors and expectant families facing life-changing decisions. 'If you find out you've got a disabled baby, do people think they can't actually cope with it?' the 30-year-old wonders. 'Is it because they don't know what it's like to have a disability? Are they nervous? Do they want a picture-perfect baby?'

# NEW THIS WEEK

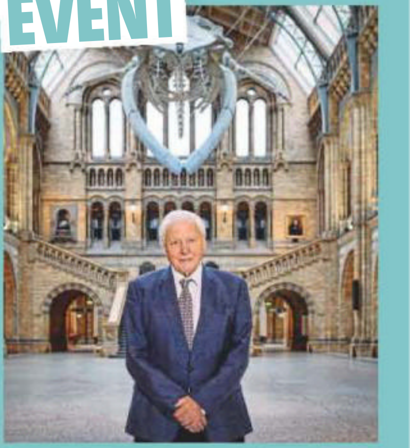
## FILM

### Lilo & Stitch

The latest beloved Disney to film to get a live-action remake is family-favourite *Lilo & Stitch*, which first landed on our screens in 2002. The touching story follows a lonely Hawaiian girl, Lilo, who becomes best friends with a lovable alien experiment named Stitch. Although engineered to be a force of destruction, Stitch's destiny ultimately lays in helping Lilo mend her broken family.

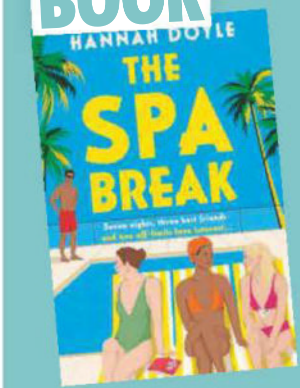
## EVENT

### Our Story With David Attenborough



London's Natural History Museum is launching a brand-new experience narrated by the legendary David Attenborough's dulcet tones. Drawing on his career, the broadcaster delves into the wonders of our species from our earliest beginnings. With stunning projections, real-world footage and 360-degree immersion, it's a first of its kind for the museum. Opening 19 June, general tickets are on sale from 22 May from nhm.ac.uk

## BOOK



### The Spa Break

**by Hannah Doyle (HQ Digital)**

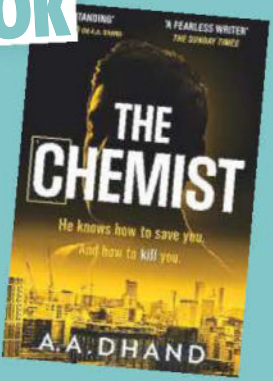
Jess is ready for a week of luxury with her best friends at a high-end spa, complete with gourmet food, cocktails and relaxation. When she spots a gorgeous man at the pool, her getaway seems even more perfect – until she realises he's someone from her past. Someone she should have recognised. Someone she definitely shouldn't be attracted to. As old feelings resurface, her relaxing retreat takes an unexpected turn. The perfect holiday read.

## BOOK

### The Chemist

**by A.A.Dhand (HQ)**

Madison March has the perfect life – a loving husband, happy children and a beautiful Montana homestead. She spends her days baking, gardening and watching sunsets on the porch. It's the dream life anyone would envy. But beneath the flawless exterior, everything is a lie. As cracks begin to form in her carefully crafted world, the truth threatens to unravel everything she's worked so hard to hide. An outstanding and clever read that we couldn't put down.


'A FEARLESS WRITER' THE SUNDAY TIMES
THE CHEMIST
He knows how to save you. And how to kill you.
A.A. DHAND

# Celebrating its landmark 20th series, Chris Packham and Michaela Strachan are back with more heartwarming tales of British wildlife – from a brand-new location in the heart of the Peak District

It's time for our annual dose of wildlife wonders, as Chris Packham, Michaela Strachan – and Iolo Williams, coming to us daily from a three-week nature trek through Northern Ireland – return with the show that celebrates springtime. As ever, an array of live nest-cameras are rigged up across the countryside, bringing viewers unprecedented access to baby birds, badger setts, otter holts and waterways. And this series is a little bit special, as it marks 20 years of being on air.

## How are you going to celebrate?

**Chris:** By looking back over those 20 years and including the most remarkable moments in terms of what we've learnt, all because we wire a camera up to a van and a succession of young people stay up all night making notes.

**Michaela:** We're going to be looking at how the programme has evolved. And it really has. It's a celebration to still have a series that's looked at British wildlife for two decades, with a loyal audience who look forward to it.

## What is it about doing the show that you most look forward to?

**Chris:** For me, it's working with the team. Everyone's wrapped up in the energy and enthusiasm for it and wants to make the best programme we can, so that's a great atmosphere to be in.

**Michaela:** I really look forward to spending a month in a wild place. So many people say, 'Oh, you look well!' I think that's because I spend so much time outdoors, with the healing power of nature. I honestly think it's made a difference in my adult life – to my mental health, my energy levels and all that sort of thing.

## Do you ever worry about the cameras not really capturing anything?

# ‘The audience love it when we GO WRONG!’

Michaela and Chris

**Michaela:** When Chris goes on about a fly in a nest, we know we’re struggling! Every year we’re like, ‘Oh my God, will we have enough?’ – but it’s amazing what nature presents you with, and there are always stories to tell.

### Does the live aspect of *Springwatch* faze you?

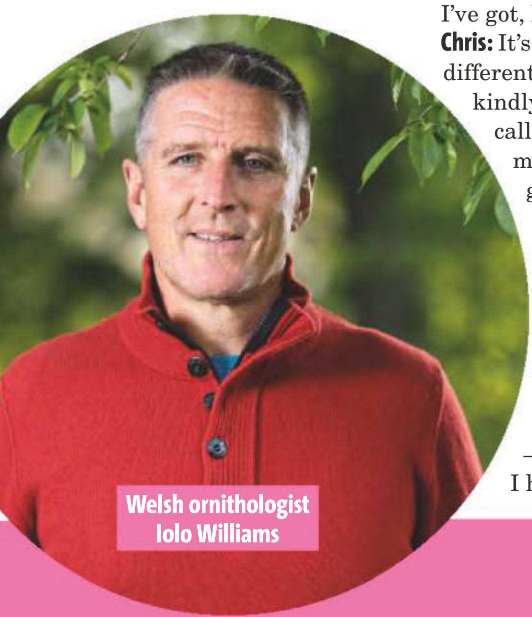
**Michaela:** I’m so relaxed now, because most of the time it’s Chris and I together and we pick each other up if we fall over. And the audience love it when we go wrong! He can often go off on one and we have to grab him back…

**Chris:** I do find it hard to sort of concentrate on one thing for quite a long time and, once I’ve peaked, then I am likely to start thinking about something else…

### Do either of you do anything special to prepare for a new series?

**Michaela:** I look at what T-shirts I’ve got, I look at my wardrobe…

**Chris:** It’s funny, I have a different approach… I very kindly get sent what I might call scientific-based magazines, and so I’ll go through the huge pile on my kitchen worktop and gen up on the last six months. My preparation is more sort of research, so I have a finger on the latest science. T-shirts is a last-minute choice – they’ll be the same ones I had last year!



Welsh ornithologist Iolo Williams

### You’ve worked with each other for a long time. Any annoying habits?

**Michaela:** I think we’ve only got a couple of minutes left! Chris is OCD and he’s autistic, and in meetings he’ll spend the whole time lining his pens and pad up and everything, and sometimes I’ll just tweak them, which makes me sound cruel actually!

**Chris:** There are things I tease Michaela about constantly. We have programme cards that we write, and Michaela probably has about 20 per show. I have three of four. And she writes all this stuff on them, so I’m always teasing her about her diligence – but we approach the job with a different type of professionalism!

Michaela loves the great outdoors

### Have you ever been bitten by an animal?

**Chris:** Only the other day – in fact, I was really nibbled. I’ve been making another series for the BBC about evolution, and we were filming a piece about army ants. I lay down alongside a trail of them running through a forest in Kenya, and the soldiers came out and gave me a right seeing to. We filmed quite gruesome shots of me pulling them out of my skin.

**Michaela:** I was bitten by a lemur in Madagascar, and they thought it might have rabies, so I went to A&E for a jab and I said to the nurse, ‘Out of interest, why are you laying a bed out for me?’ She looked at her notes and said, ‘Oh – bitten by a lemur! I thought it said, ‘broken femur!’

● *Springwatch, BBC2, Monday 26 May*

By Hannah Wright Pictures BBC

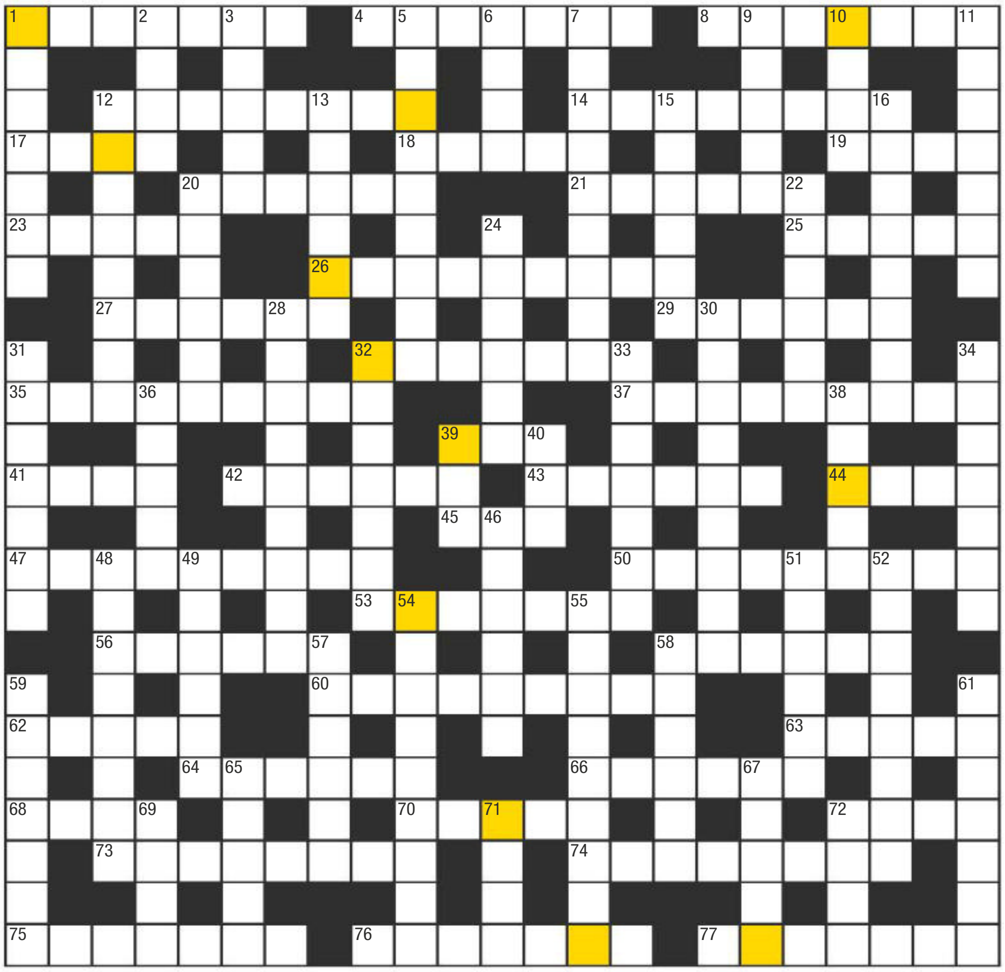
# Puzzles

**YOU could be in with a chance of winning £200**

## PRIZE crossword

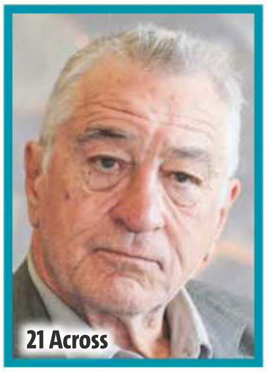
**WIN £200**

Solve the crossword to find, reading from top to bottom in the shaded squares, the name of a US actor and musician. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel, below right.



### Across

**1** Explanatory drawing (7)
**4** Devastating wave (7)
**8** Food energy unit (7)
**12** Type of banana cooked like a vegetable in Caribbean cuisine (8)
**14** Immature, juvenile (8)
**17** Dish out playing cards (4)
**18** Third Greek letter (5)
**19** - - - story, unlikely tale (4)
**20** Spanish title for a married woman (6)
**21** Robert - - -, film star, pictured below (2,4)
**23** Feed (data) into a computer (5)



21 Across

**25** There's a leaning one in Pisa! (5)
**26** Circus performer who works with big cats (4-5)
**27** Sex drive (6)
**29** Cream-filled choux pastry finger (6)
**32** *'Why, why, why...'* didn't Tom Jones top the charts with this song! (7)
**35** - - - Zeta-Jones, Welsh Oscar winner married to Michael Douglas (9)
**37** Another name for the Lord's Prayer – also the first two words! (3,6)
**39** Precious stone (3)
**41** Midday (4)
**42** Garb, clothing (6)
**43** Shakespeare's fairy king in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (6)
**44** Arm or leg (4)
**45** Central point, gist (3)
**47** 'Globe' vegetable (9)
**50** Mongolia's capital, anagram of BANAL TOUR (4,5)
**53** Nine-sided shape (7)
**56** List of items to be discussed (6)
**58** Deep narrow gorge (6)
**60** Small block of fuel for a barbecue (9)
**62** Garlic mayonnaise (5)
**63** 'Marry in - - -, repent at leisure', saying (5)
**64** Pick (6)
**66** *Never - - -*, Take That song (6)
**68** Great British thespian, - - - Guinness (4)
**70** Ex-footballer married to Posh Spice, - - - Beckham (5)
**72** Operatic solo (4)
**73** Saying, '- - - is the best medicine' (8)
**74** Jim Carrey comedy, *Bruce - - -* (8)
**75** *EastEnders* character who was played by Maisie Smith (7)
**76** Stomach (7)
**77** Pledge, vow (7)

### Down

**1** Mild contempt (7)
**2** Seabird (4)
**3** - - - Murphy, *Schitt's Creek* actress, pictured below right (5)
**5** Cocktail, - - - sling (9)
**6** Usual, standard (4)
**7** Australian nut tree (9)
**9** Viper (5)
**10** Hops kiln (4)
**11** Go out and investigate a new area (7)
**12** Thin brochure (8)
**13** Tom Hanks movie, *- - - 13* (6)
**15** Pay no heed to (6)
**16** Rita - - -, actress who's namechecked in *Vogue* by Madonna (8)
**20** Horse shelter (6)
**22** Capital of Canada (6)
**24** Cormoran - - -, private detective played by Tom Burke (6)
**28** Timber that's been washed ashore (9)
**30** Creamy pasta sauce made with bacon and cheese (9)
**31** Cate Blanchett psychological thriller, *Notes On A - - -* (7)
**32** Inhabitant, resident (7)
**33** Scoring hit in baseball (4,3)
**34** Corruption where payment is given for favours or silence (7)
**36** Vietnam's chief city (5)
**38** Gene Pitney hit, *Twenty Four Hours From - - -* (5)
**39** Information (3)
**40** Unruly crowd (3)
**46** Planet that's seventh from the sun (6)
**48** Drying-up cloth (3,5)
**49** Ordained minister (6)
**51** Intelligent, clever (6)
**52** Government department with control over public revenue (8)
**54** Dull green military uniform colour (5,4)
**55** Old-fashioned (3-2-4)
**57** Diane - - -, Labour MP (6)
**58** Famous Grand National horse (3,3)
**59** Musical set in Berlin's Kit Kat Klub (7)
**61** Atonement for sins (7)
**65** Wrestler, Hulk - - - (5)
**67** Keen (5)
**69** Young whale (4)
**71** Block, ban (4)
**72** Tiny particle (4)

3 Down

**COMPETITION AND GIVEAWAY RULES** Competitions open to residents of the UK (including Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), Eire or BFPOs, aged 18 or over, except Bauer Media employees, its affiliated companies, any promotional partners, or their families and anyone connected with the competitions. Enter by text, online or phone. No purchase necessary. Answers must be the product of own work. Unless expressly stated, travel expenses and spending money is not included. There is no cash alternative to prizes and no alternative holidays can be offered. Prizes are not transferable. No responsibility can be accepted for entries that are delayed, damaged, mislaid or wrongly delivered, or for any loss in service of the online entry mechanism or for entries lost, delayed or corrupted due to computer error in transit. Only one entry per person. A winning entry is the first correct answer drawn after the closing date. For a free entry, enter online at bellamagazine.co.uk. Prizewinners will be notified by post on headed paper or by official email. The results are published. Winners must agree to the publication of their names, age and photos. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Your information will only be used to administer promotions in accordance with our privacy policy. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Promoter: H Bauer Publishing. Full T&Cs can be found at bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html

**Crossword** Neil Locker. **Pictures** Shutterstock

# Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares with the numbers 1 to 9 so that each row, each column and each smaller 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

## EASY

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | | 3 | | | | | 6 | |
| 4 | 7 | | 6 | 5 | | 2 | | |
| | | | 1 | | | 8 | | |
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| | | 7 | | 4 | | 6 | | |
| 3 | 9 | | | | | | 4 | |
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| | 1 | | | | | 9 | | 3 |

## HARD

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*Take A Break Sudoku* magazine, containing over 80 fun-to-solve puzzles, is on sale now.

# PRIZE Arrowword

WIN £200

Solve the clues, writing your answers in the directions shown by the arrows, to reveal, reading down the shaded squares, the name of the town where Nadiya Hussain was born and raised. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel below.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spice Girls hit, *Too ---* | ▼ | Sherry dessert? | Actress, --- Collette | ▼ | Splits up, uncouples | Graceful and sophisticated | ▼ | Adoring praise | Units of heredity | <br>Nadiya Hussain | | | | |
| Spoke ▶ | | ▼ | ▼ | | | ▼ | | Summerhouse | ▼ | | | | | |
| Short haircut ▶ | | | | | Light toboggan ▶ | | | ▼ | | | | | | |
| ▶ | | | | | Flair ▶ | | 🟨 | | | | | | | |
| Beijing's country | Coniferous tree ▶ | | | | Stare at – stars? ▶ | | | | | | | | | |
| Perfume | --- con carne, dish | | Subsides ▶ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ▶ | ▼ | | | | Pen's tip ▶ | | | | Jogs | Successor | Caribbean country | ▼ | Requires | ▼ |
| Treat wrongly | | Origin | Hideous | | Molar, eg ▶ | | | | ▼ | ▼ | Traps | | Jeans fabric | |
| ▶ | | ▼ | 🟨 ▼ | | | Georgia's capital | | Dwell (in) ▶ | | | ▼ | | ▼ | |
| Captain's record of events ▶ | | | | Science room | Oddity | ▼ | Indicated with a finger ▶ | | | | | 🟨 | | |
| Soothing song for a baby ▶ | | | | ▼ | ▼ | | | Railway vehicles ▶ | | | | | | |
| ▶ | | | | | | | Burnt remains | Hangman's loop | | Badgers' burrows | | Fourth month | | *Bake Off* no-no, --- bottom |
| Indian rice dish | UAE ruler | | Marc ---, T. Rex front man ▶ | | 🟨 | | ▼ | ▼ | Garment joins ▶ | ▼ | | ▼ | | ▼ |
| ▶ | ▼ | | Feline creature | Popular Japanese soup ▶ | | | | | Intuition? (1,1,1) ▶ | | | | --- Healy, Saturdays singer | |
| Busy honey maker! | | Go to sleep (5,3) ▶ | ▼ | | | | | | | | Small carpet ▶ | | ▼ | |
| ▶ | | | | Porkies! ▶ | | | | | *Crazy Little --- Called Love*, song ▶ | | | | 🟨 | |
| Peruvian bean? | | Child's plaything ▶ | | | | Witnesses, observes ▶ | | | | | Prepare (a table) ▶ | | | |

## SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solutions can be found online now at bellamagazine.co.uk

**ISSUE 18**
**PRIZE ANSWERS**
Crossword
**Lana Del Rey**
Arrowword
**Canada**

**Full solutions to this week's prize puzzles can be found at bellamagazine.co.uk after the closing date: 2 June 2025**

## HOW TO ENTER THE PRIZE COMPETITIONS

**BY PHONE: 0901 130 0237**

When asked for the issue number, key in 20. Calls cost 50p per call, plus your network access charge. (UK readers only.) You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission.

**BY TEXT: 65115**

Text BEL20 then a space followed by your name, house number or name, your postcode, then your answer(s), all separated by a space, to 65115, eg Jane Smith 10 SL5 9JN Answer(s). Texts cost 50p plus your standard network rate. Keep texts under 160 characters or you may be charged for more than one text.

- If you enter after the closing date, you will not be entered but may be charged. Not available in Eire. Please ensure your entry is completed correctly, as incorrect entries may be charged but not entered. This is not a subscription service.
- **You are automatically consenting to receive further communications about these competitions from us via SMS text. You can opt out of this at any time by texting STOP to 65115. This will be charged at your standard network rate, but you will need to do this each time you enter the competition by text.** Your personal data will (regardless of whether you opt out) always be used to process your entry. For further information, see general terms and privacy policy at Bauerdatapromise.co.uk.
- Lines close at 11.59pm on 2 June 2025.

Phone UK SP: Spoke (0333 202 3390). Text SP: Bauer Media. Email smshelp@bauermedia.co.uk or call 0330 159 2525.

**OR ENTER ONLINE:**
Bellamagazine.co.uk

Continued over the page...

# Puzzles contin

## BITS & PIECES

We've taken a completed crossword puzzle and cut it up to give 24 pieces. Your task is to rebuild the puzzle with the help of the piece that we've already placed in the grid.

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| ~~S~~ | ■ | ~~B~~ |

| | | |
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| A | ■ | A |
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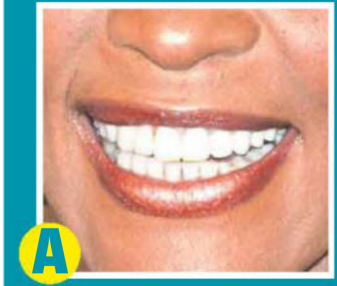
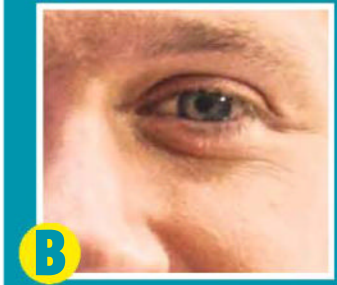
| I | ■ | ■ |

## GUESS THE CELEB

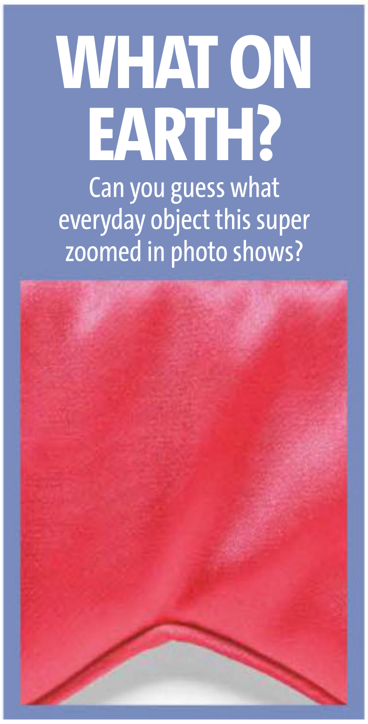
Can you name these stars by seeing close ups of their famous faces?


A


B

## WHAT ON EARTH?

Can you guess what everyday object this super zoomed in photo shows?



# ued...

# ROUND SUM

Work out the solution to the sum by following the instructions contained within the arrow.

16

x9

HALVE IT

÷6

DOUBLE IT

-3

+2

x4

÷2

+3

☐

# CODEBREAKER

When you've solved this codebreaker, the identity of our disguised celebrity will be revealed in the shaded squares. Then, the same code will help you complete the lower grid and read a mystery fact about them.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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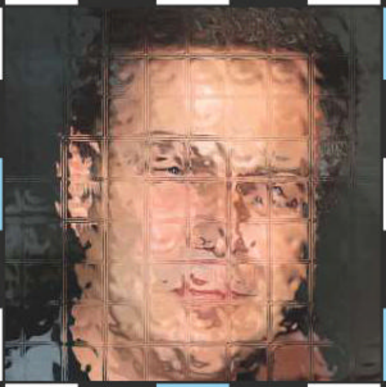
| ■ | 20 | ■ | 25 | ■ | 6 | 2 | 1 | ■ | 10 | ■ | 24 | ■ | 4 | ■ |
| 20 | 14 | 17 | 7 | 10 | 16 | ■ | 11 | 9 | 25 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 17 | 19 |
| ■ | 7 | ■ | 18 | ■ | 8 | ■ | 22 | ■ | 17 | ■ | 3 | ■ | 12 | ■ |
| 7 | 8 | 15 | ■ | 19 | 11 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 17 | 16 | ■ | 10 | 15 | 11 |
| ■ | 23 | ■ | 26 | ■ | 12 | ■ | 14 | ■ | 19 | ■ | 24 | ■ | 6 | ■ |
| 7 | 13 | 14 | 8 | 17 |  | | | | | 23 | 2 | 18 | 17 | 8 |
| 21 | ■ | ■ | 2 | ■ | | | | | | ■ | 21 | ■ | ■ | 2 |
| 5 | 2 | 26 | 14 | 17 | | | | | | 7 | 19 | 11 | 17 | 14 |
| 11 | ■ | ■ | 25 | ■ | | | | | | ■ | 6 | ■ | ■ | 26 |
| 6 | 17 | 5 | 17 | 8 | | | | | | 8 | 17 | 7 | 12 | 4 |
| ■ | 5 | ■ | 19 | ■ | 8 | ■ | 22 | ■ | 1 | ■ | 19 | ■ | 2 | ■ |
| 15 | 11 | 21 | ■ | 25 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 26 | 2 | 21 | ■ | 1 B | 2 O | 3 X |
| ■ | 21 | ■ | 11 | ■ | 6 | ■ | 13 | ■ | 21 | ■ | 15 | ■ | 6 | ■ |
| 10 | 12 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 23 | 13 | ■ | 14 | 21 | 17 | 5 | 17 | 21 |
| ■ | 17 | ■ | 25 | ■ | 16 | ■ | 16 | 17 | 10 | ■ | 16 | ■ | 8 | ■ |

A ~~B~~ C D E F G H I J

K L M N ~~O~~ P Q R S

T U V W ~~X~~ Y Z

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| B | O | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| **14** | **15** | **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** | **20** | **21** | **22** | **23** | **24** | **25** | **26** |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | | ■ | | ■ | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |

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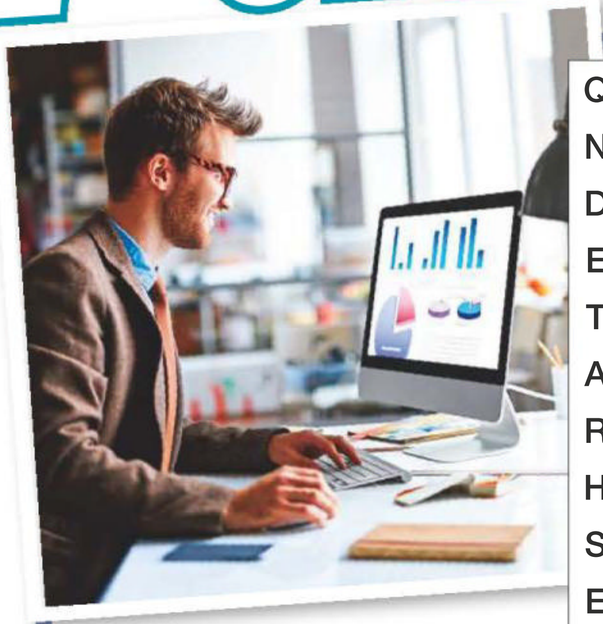
| | | | | ■ | | | ■ | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |

Pictures Shutterstock

Continued over the page...

# Puzzles contin



## THE IT CROWD-PLEASER

Test your puzzling tech-nique with this crash course on computing words.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| D | A | O | L | N | W | O | D | D | R | A | O | B | R | E | H | T | O | M |
| E | C | M | I | T | A | B | R | I | Z | O | S | A | T | E | L | S | N | G |
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BIT DEPTH
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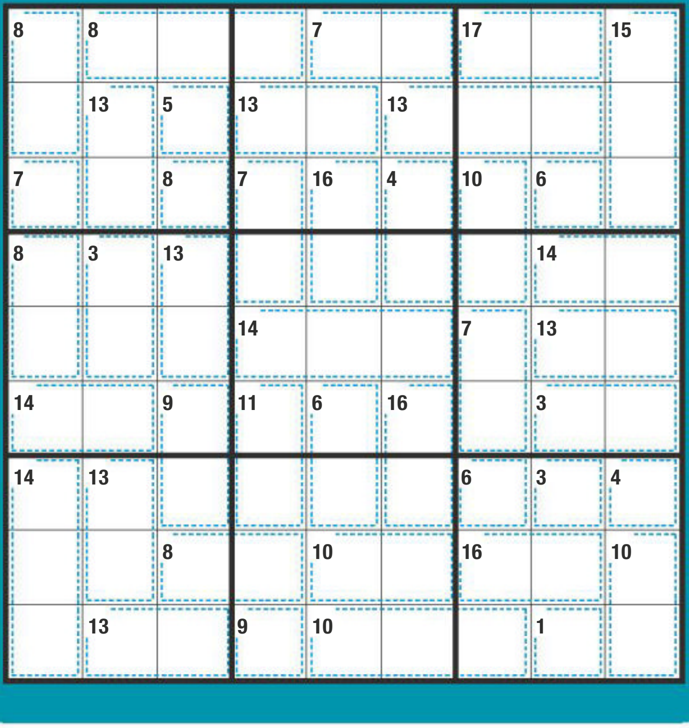
BROADBAND
CABLE
CHECKSUM
COMPILER
COMPRESSION
CONSOLE
CONTROL PANEL
DIALOGUE BOX
DIGITAL
DIRECTORY
DOCUMENT
DOWNLOAD
ENCODING
ENCRYPTION
EXTENSION
FONT
HARD DISK
INSTALL
INTERNET
KEYBOARD
LANGUAGE
MONITOR
MOTHERBOARD
MULTIMEDIA
NETWORK
PRINT BUFFER
PROCESSOR
REFRESH RATE
REGISTER
RENDERING
SCANNER
SERIAL PORT
SOUNDCARD
TASKBAR
WIRELESS
Z-BUFFER

# ued...

# KILLER SUDOKU

Killer Sudoku is based on the traditional sudoku grid and every column, every row and every 3x3 box must contain the digits 1 to 9. But there's a twist – the dotted squares must be filled with numbers that add up to that in the left corner.



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| | 13 | 5 | 13 | | 13 | | | |
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| 8 | 3 | 13 | | | | | 14 | |
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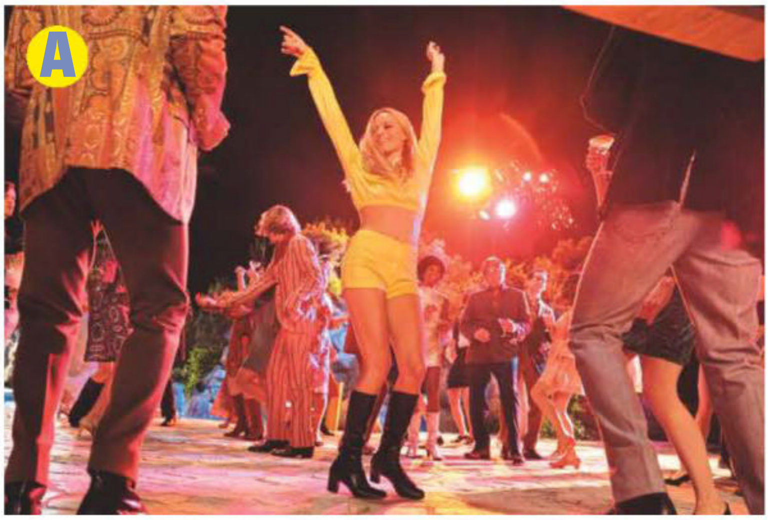
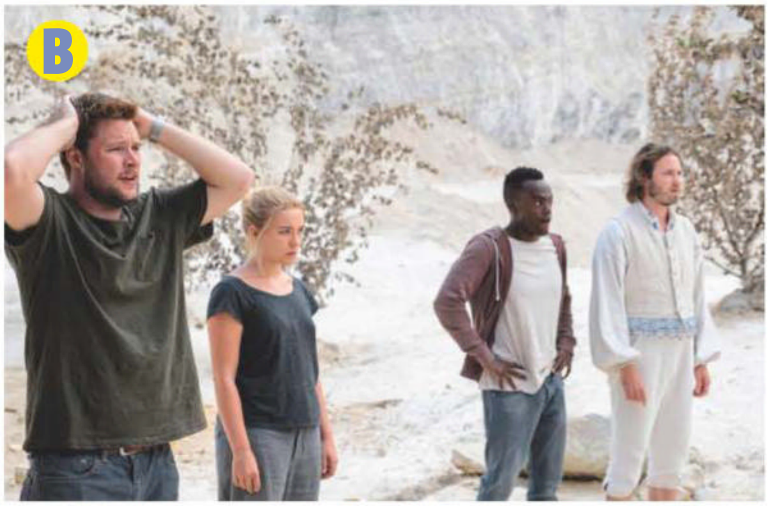
| 14 | | 9 | 11 | 6 | 16 | | 3 | |
| 14 | 13 | | | | | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| | | 8 | | 10 | | 16 | | 10 |
| | 13 | | 9 | 10 | | | 1 | |

# GUESS THE MOVIE

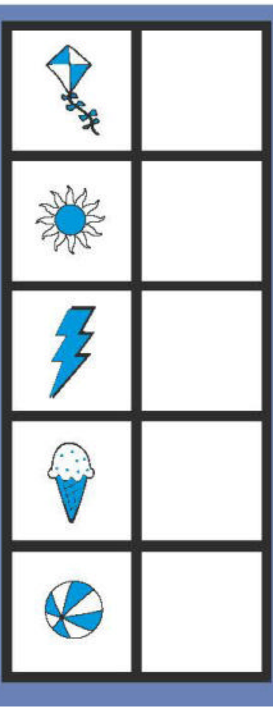
Can you name these famous films from looking at just one scene?

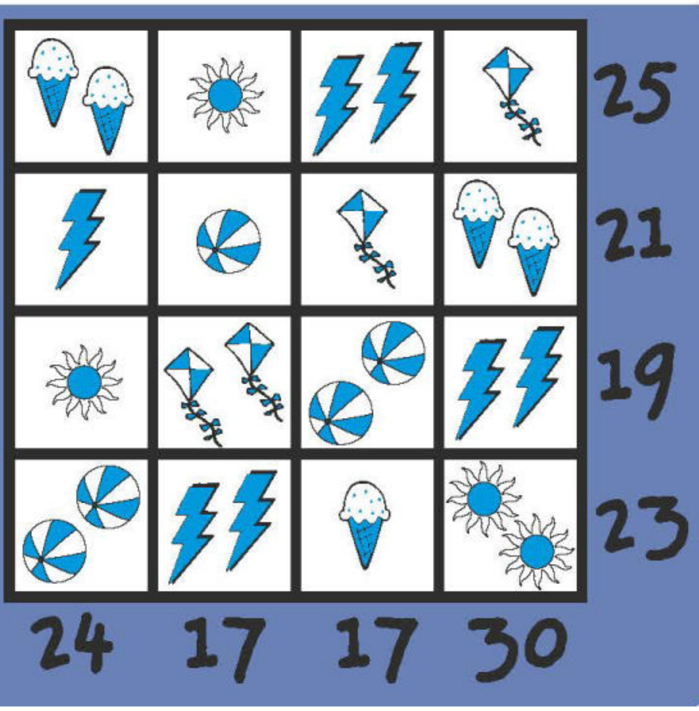




# TOTAL-LY PUZZLED

In this puzzle, each symbol stands for a whole number between one and nine. The number at the end of each row and column equals the sum of the numbers in it. When a symbol appears twice in a square it is doubled. Can you work out which number each symbol represents?





**Pictures** Shutterstock

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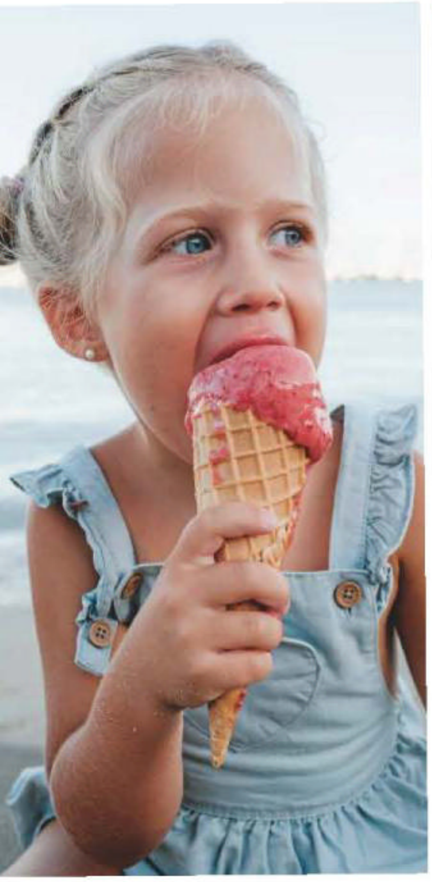
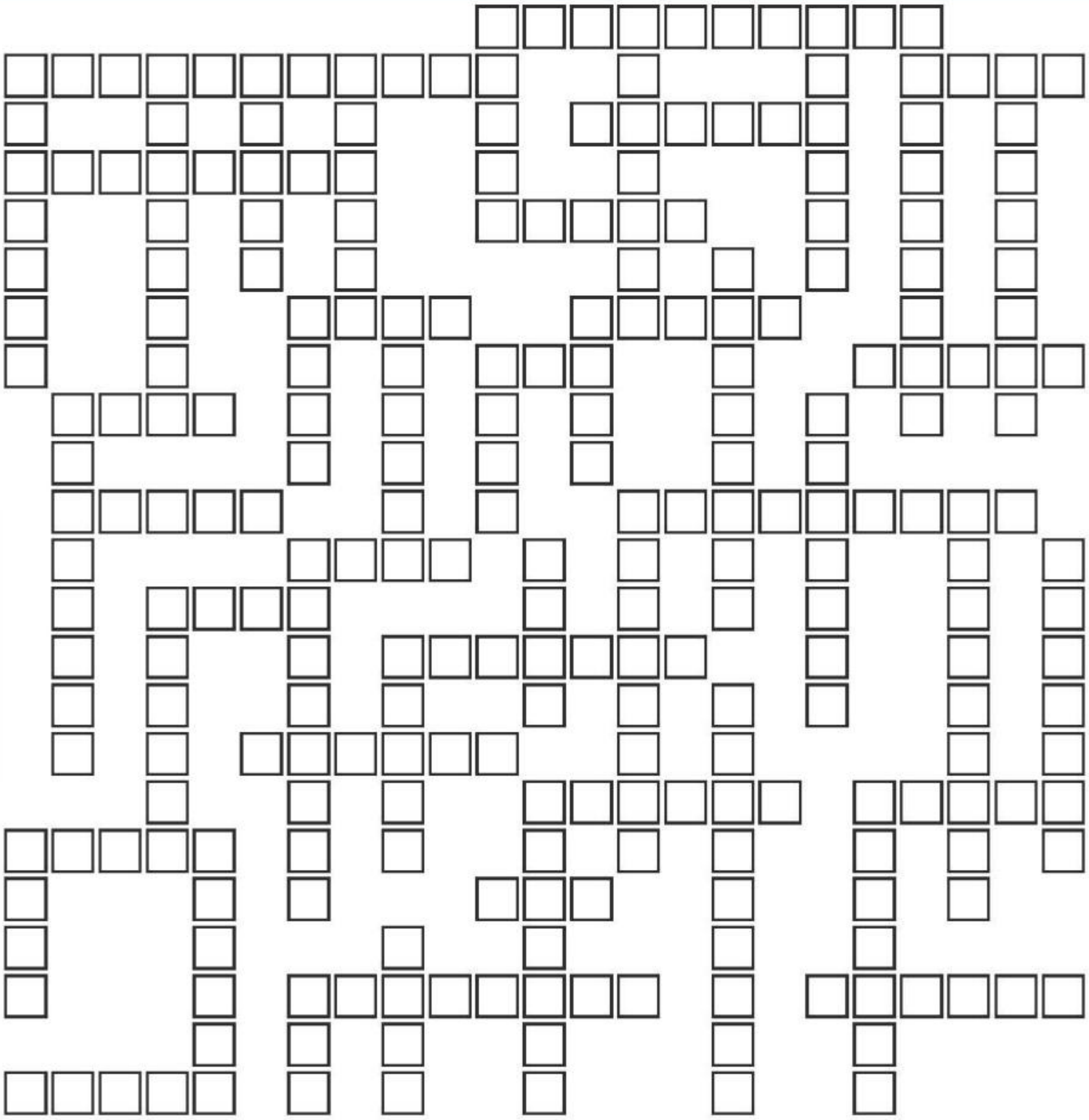




# SHORE THING

Will you coast through this fill-in puzzle all about a day at the seaside?

**3 LETTERS**
BAY
SEA
SUN

**4 LETTERS**
BALL
CHIP
CRAB
FISH
KITE
LILO
ROCK
SAND
SURF
TIDE
WAVE

**5 LETTERS**
BEACH
CLIFF
FERRY
FLAGS
HOTEL
LINER
SHELL
SPADE
TOWEL
YACHT

**6 LETTERS**
ANGLER
ARCADE
HAMPER
LIMPET
MARINA
PICNIC
SURFER
TRUNKS
WINKLE

**7 LETTERS**
BLANKET
BREAKER
FRISBEE
LOW TIDE
SANDALS
SEAGULL
SHINGLE

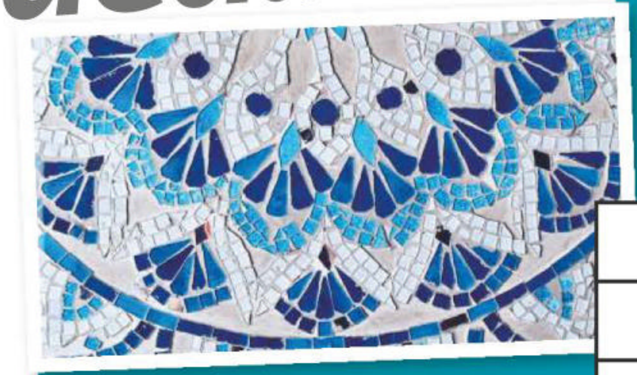
**8 LETTERS**
CHILDREN
ICE CREAM
LIFEBELT
PADDLERS
ROCK POOL
SCALLOPS
SEAFRONT
SWIMSUIT

**9 LETTERS**
DECKCHAIR
DRIFTWOOD
PROMENADE
SPEEDBOAT

**10 LETTERS**
COASTGUARD

**11 LETTERS**
FERRIS WHEEL

# ued...



# SKELETON

Given four clue numbers and four black squares, can you complete this crossword? When the puzzle is complete, the pattern of the black squares will be symmetrical – so you can work out the positions of several more squares right away.

## ACROSS

- **1** Pencil eraser
- **4** Measure of six feet used to assess the depth of water
- **8** Point where two walls meet
- **10** Old MacDonald?
- **11** At no time
- **12** Hard up
- **14** Pistols at dawn?
- **15** Determination and self-control
- **17** Type of music composed by Bach or Mozart, perhaps
- **20** Uncommon
- **21** Period of 12 months
- **22** Subtract
- **24** Image made up of small tiles (pictured)
- **25** Security
- **26** Scuffle, scrap
- **27** *Bella* fan?

## DOWN

- **1** Formula for cooking a dish
- **2** Hole or tunnel in the ground dug by a rabbit, eg
- **3** Flat, level
- **5** Slightly open
- **6** Comedy
- **7** Only
- **9** Feasible, pragmatic
- **10** Fierce, savage
- **13** --- range, fairground attraction
- **14** Rot
- **16** On time, punctual
- **17** Emergency
- **18** Myth
- **19** Communion with God
- **22** *The --- On The Floss*, classic novel by George Eliot
- **23** Wise herb?

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# CONNECT 4

What links these four things?

**1** A no 1 hit in 2014 for Ella Henderson

**2** The title of the play which marked both Cheryl's and Lily Allen's West End debut

**3** Blinky, Inky, Pinky and Clyde

**4** A sitcom starring Charlotte Ritchie as Alison, a young woman who inherits a crumbling mansion called Button House

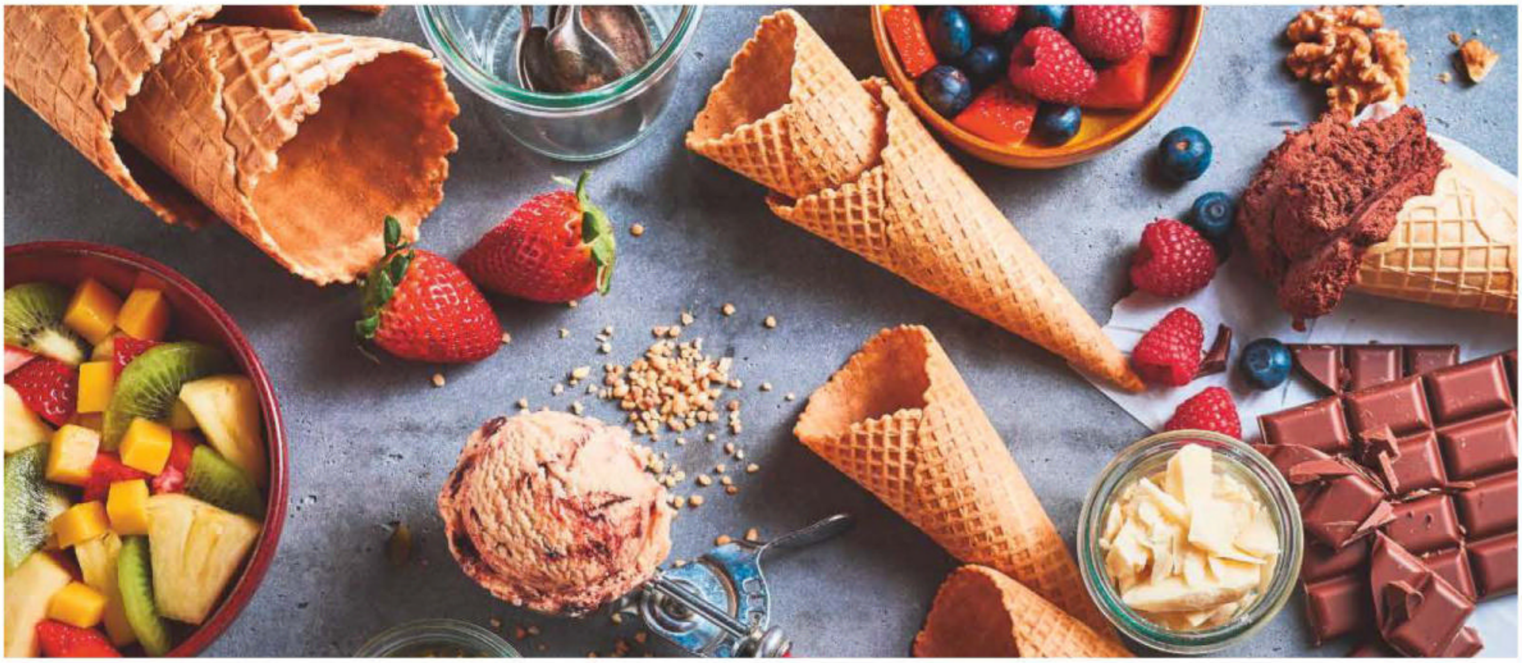
**Pictures** Shutterstock

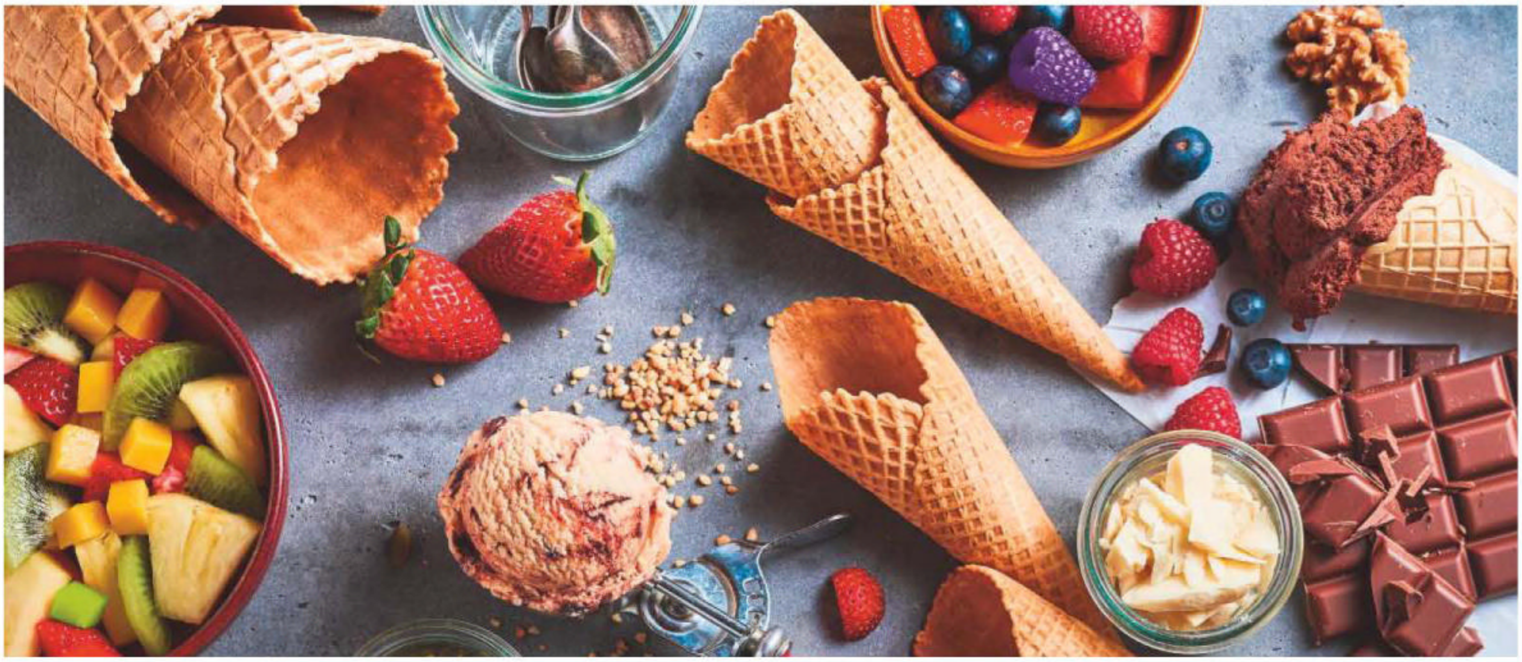
Continued over the page...

# Puzzles contin

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot eight differences between these two photos?





ued...

# SMART METER

Are you a bit of a quiz whizz? Pit your wits against the mixed bag of posers below and see how you get on...

**CAUTION**
**Some questions contain dangerous levels of difficulty!**

## POT LUCK

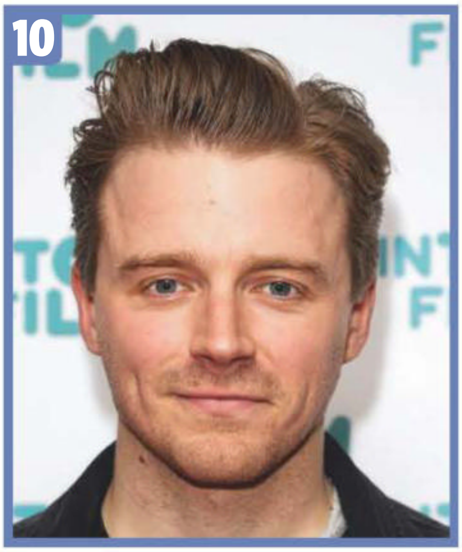
**1** 'My very excellent mother just served us noodles' is a mnemonic devised to help people remember what?
**2** Who is the current vice president of the US?
**3** What is the title of the new *Mission: Impossible* film, the eighth in the series?
**4** Which peak in the Caucasus Mountains is the highest mountain in Europe?

4

## BONES

**5** Dr Leonard 'Bones' McCoy is a character who features in which sci-fi universe?
**6** What is the medical name for the collarbone?
**7** *The Lovely Bones*, adapted into a film starring Saoirse Ronan and Rachel Weisz, is a bestselling novel by which American writer?
**8** Boney M topped the charts in 1978 with a double A-side featuring two of their most famous songs: *Rivers Of Babylon* and which other?

7



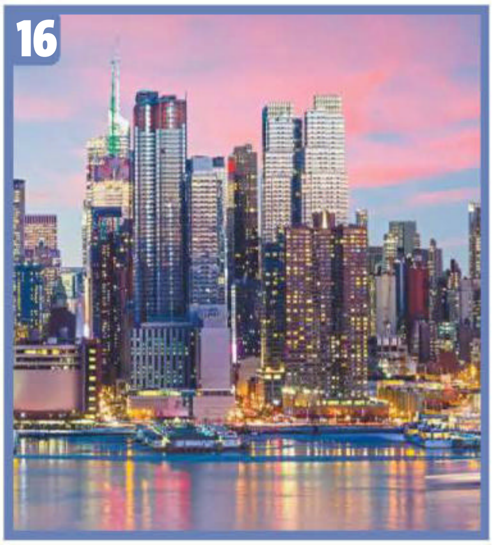
10

## RIVERS

**9** The Boat Race is an annual event where competing teams from Oxford and Cambridge universities row for glory on which English river?
**10** Jack Lowden plays River Cartwright in hit series *Slow Horses*, but who plays his slovenly and flatulent boss Jackson Lamb?
**11** Which river in South America shares its name with a Womble?
**12** Fashion retailer River Island was founded by Bernard Lewis in which decade of the last century?

## APPLES

**13** Which now uncoupled celebrity pair are the parents of a daughter called Apple and a son named Moses?
**14** According to the saying, 'There's a rotten apple in every' what?
**15** Apple Records was a record label founded in 1968 by which British band?
**16** The Big Apple is a nickname for which US metropolis?



16

## CAPITALS

**17** In which European capital can you visit ABBA The Museum?
**18** Who was runner-up to Giovanna Fletcher on series 20 of *I'm A Celebrity...* and now hosts the breakfast show on Capital radio?
**19** What is the capital of New Zealand?
**20** *Capital* or *Das Kapital* is considered the most significant work by which German-born philosopher and revolutionary socialist?

17

ABBA
THE
MUSEUM

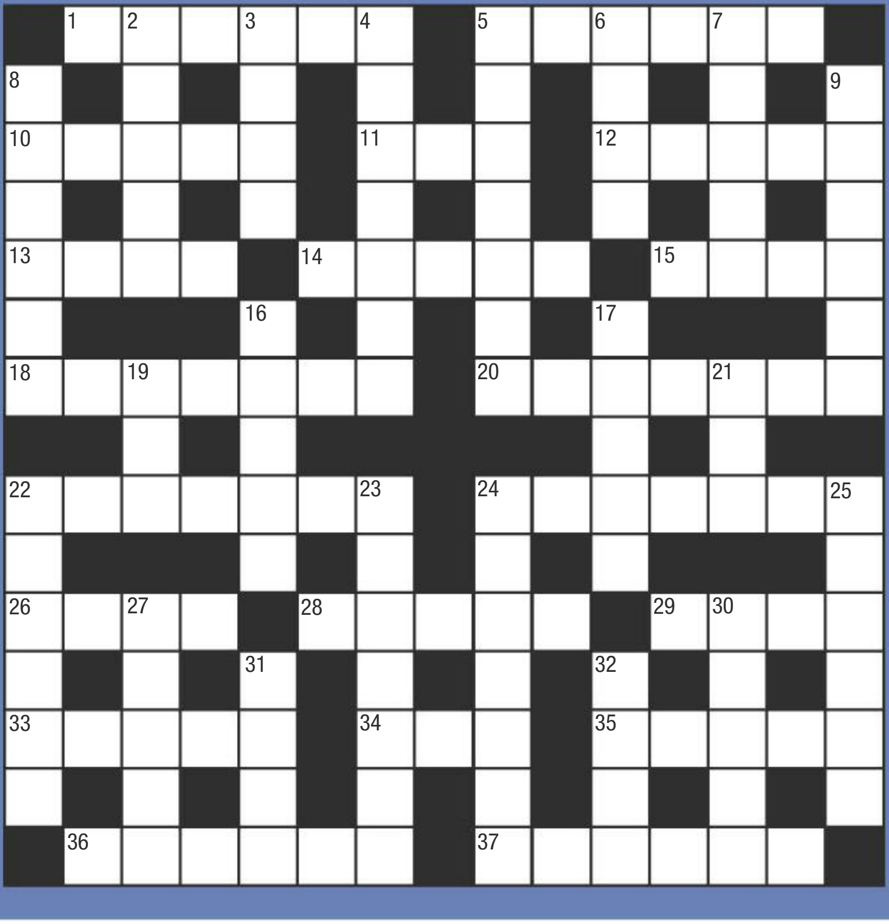
**Pictures** Shutterstock

Continued over the page...

# Puzzles

## MISSING LINKS

Each clue consists of three words which have a fourth in common. Find the missing link and enter it into the grid. For instance, the words SHEEP, BISCUIT and TIRED are all linked by the word DOG (SHEEPDOG, DOG BISCUIT and DOG-TIRED).



### ACROSS

**1** Boxing ● Over ● Eye
**5** Case ● Shop ● Book
**10** Standing ● Mail ● Form
**11** Hockey ● Cream ● Pick
**12** Large ● Time ● Film
**13** Cottage ● Tongue ● Up
**14** Still ● Hand ● Band
**15** Speech ● Duty ● Will
**18** Sewing ● Fruit ● Gun
**20** Carriage ● Track ● Model
**22** Minister ● Kitchen ● Filing
**24** Surgeon ● Money ● Bullet
**26** Stone ● Quick ● Light
**28** Sales ● Disk ● Way
**29** Family ● Apple ● Top
**33** Thought ● Sought ● Taste
**34** Price ● Civil ● Lord
**35** Study ● World ● Tone
**36** Corn ● Sun ● Pot
**37** Card ● Chrome ● Fever

### DOWN

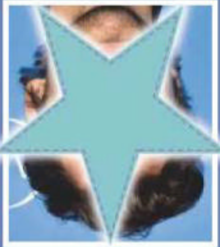
**2** Sparrow ● Fund ● Row
**3** Pitch ● Horse ● Room
**4** Wolf ● Stop ● Tin
**5** Vacuum ● Window ● Dry
**6** Mind ● Secret ● Fire
**7** Beef ● Man ● Ant
**8** False ● Drawer ● Rock
**9** Harness ● Catch ● Pin
**16** Panda ● Killer ● Gas
**17** Decision ● Score ● Cup
**19** Bear ● Lion ● Scout
**21** Blanket ● Paint ● Suit
**22** White ● Bone ● Dog
**23** Javelin ● Flame ● Discus
**24** Stricken ● Line ● Trap
**25** Blossom ● Tomato ● Brandy
**27** Precious ● Heavy ● Scrap
**30** Telescope ● Activity ● Local
**31** Camera ● Cabin ● Neck
**32** Marks ● Moon ● Half

## CUNNING CONUNDRUM

Can you solve this nine-letter anagram?

U N I T I N T R O

# STARSCOPE



If you can't solve this puzzle, you're well and truly starstruck! Each number in the grid represents a letter. Solve the clues and transfer the letters to their numbered places in the grid. The completed puzzle will reveal a message for Aquarius. The letters in the shaded squares, when read in order, will spell out the name of a celebrity (5,6) born under this sign.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|1|2|3|4|■|5|6|■|7|■|8|9|10|11|12|■|
|13|14|15|16|■|17|18|■|19|20|21|■|22|■|■|■|
|23|24|25|26|■|27|28|29|30|31|32|33|34|35|■|■|
|36|37|38|39|40|41|42|43|.|■|44|45|46|■|47|48|
|49|50|51|?|■|52|53|54|■|55|56|57|58|■|■|■|
|59|60|61|62|63|64|65|66|■|67|68|69|70|!|■|■|

**1** Brief fall of rain ● 4-50-42-44-60-9
**2** Case for arrows ● 36-57-63-23-10-31
**3** Julia Roberts film, --- *Woman* ● 29-25-53-1-12-55
**4** Theatre platform ● 20-32-7-65-38
**5** Foggy, hazy ● 15-27-66-40-51
**6** Bluish mark on the skin ● 47-58-37-5-67-24
**7** Minuscule ● 35-14-43-46
**8** Cereal grain ● 70-45-61-11-13
**9** Railway stop ● 6-17-33-54-3-30-64
**10** Salmon or cod, eg ● 59-41-49-2
**11** Small burrowing mammals ● 28-69-62-48-39
**12** --- Wan, celebrity stylist and DJ ● 8-56-21
**13** Solitary, solo ● 19-52-18-34-16
**14** Animal fodder ● 68-22-26

# THIS WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

## BITS & PIECES

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|S|W|A|N|K|Y|■|C|O|B|R|A|
|Y|■|■|E|■|■|R|■|B|■|■|S|
|S|■|B|A|C|H|E|L|O|R|■|Y|
|T|O|O|T|H|■|H|■|E|A|R|L|
|E|■|N|■|A|B|E|T|■|V|■|U|
|M|A|S|O|N|■|A|■|T|E|A|M|
|A|■|A|■|T|O|R|R|E|N|T|■|
|T|R|I|P|E|■|S|■|N|■|O|■|
|I|■|■|I|D|L|E|■|D|A|M|P|
|C|L|O|G|■|E|D|G|E|■|■|R|
|■|I|■|E|■|T|■|E|R|A|S|E|
|■|M|O|O|R|H|E|N|■|M|■|C|
|T|E|R|N|■|A|■|T|I|A|R|A|
|U|■|B|■|T|R|U|E|■|Z|■|U|
|S|L|I|T|■|G|■|E|J|E|C|T|
|S|■|T|H|R|I|L|L|E|D|■|I|
|L|■|■|I|■|C|■|■|S|■|■|O|
|E|B|O|N|Y|■|C|O|T|T|O|N|

## GUESS THE CELEB

**A** Whitney Houston
**B** Niall Horan

## WHAT ON EARTH?

Sleep Mask

## ROUND SUM

49

## CODEBREAKER

|1|2|3|4|5|6|7|8|9|10|11|12|13|
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|B|O|X|H|V|L|A|R|M|S|I|C|Z|
|**14**|**15**|**16**|**17**|**18**|**19**|**20**|**21**|**22**|**23**|**24**|**25**|**26**|
|U|K|Y|E|W|D|Q|N|J|T|F|P|G|

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|■|Q|■|P|■|L|O|B|■|S|■|F|■|H|■|
|Q|U|E|A|S|Y|■|I|M|P|R|O|V|E|D|
|■|A|■|W|■|R|■|J|■|E|■|X|■|C|■|
|A|R|K|■|D|I|S|O|B|E|Y|■|S|K|I|
|■|T|■|G|■|C|■|U|■|D|■|F|■|L|■|
|A|Z|U|R|E| | | | | |T|O|W|E|R|
|N|■|■|O|■| | | | | |■|N|■|■|O|
|V|O|G|U|E| | | | | |A|D|I|E|U|
|I|■|■|P|■| | | | | |■|L|■|■|G|
|L|E|V|E|R| | | | | |R|E|A|C|H|
|■|V|■|D|■|R|■|J|■|B|■|D|■|O|■|
|K|I|N|■|P|A|R|A|G|O|N|■|B|O|X|
|■|N|■|I|■|L|■|Z|■|N|■|K|■|L|■|
|S|C|H|M|A|L|T|Z|■|U|N|E|V|E|N|
|■|E|■|P|■|Y|■|Y|E|S|■|Y|■|R|■|

**Celebrity** Peter Jones **Fact** Started a tennis academy when he was sixteen.

## WORDSEARCH

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|Q|M|L|R|X|G|N|I|R|E|D|N|E|R|Y|P|O|V|W|
|N|A|U|E|C|H|Z|K|R|A|R|E|L|O|S|N|O|C|T|
|D|A|O|L|N|W|O|D|D|R|A|O|B|R|E|H|T|O|M|
|E|C|M|I|T|A|B|R|I|Z|O|S|A|T|E|L|S|N|G|
|T|N|O|P|T|I|P|C|J|I|B|N|C|S|F|U|A|D|E|
|A|R|C|M|P|S|M|L|M|R|Y|U|I|A|U|H|N|D|I|
|R|E|G|O|P|E|S|E|O|D|E|A|F|C|O|T|B|L|O|
|H|G|T|C|D|R|R|Y|D|R|K|R|S|F|L|A|R|E|D|
|S|I|L|C|U|I|E|T|R|I|T|E|N|R|E|T|N|I|S|
|E|S|P|N|E|A|N|S|O|F|A|N|O|M|I|R|G|D|G|
|R|T|E|O|L|L|N|G|S|N|A|I|O|O|R|I|T|V|E|
|F|E|S|L|U|P|A|H|S|I|E|A|I|C|T|N|E|D|T|
|E|R|I|S|E|O|C|C|E|N|O|E|G|A|U|G|N|A|L|
|R|A|L|O|K|R|S|T|C|E|D|N|L|L|A|T|S|N|I|
|N|P|I|L|E|T|I|R|O|I|U|C|H|E|C|K|S|U|M|
|R|S|T|A|O|B|Y|W|R|W|E|C|Y|G|B|M|H|N|A|
|B|I|T|M|A|P|R|E|P|T|B|R|O|A|D|B|A|N|D|
|I|S|I|D|T|R|C|L|I|H|O|R|R|I|N|T|R|U|F|
|T|P|R|I|N|T|B|U|F|F|E|R|E|R|P|D|D|L|S|
|D|N|O|C|O|A|X|O|B|E|U|G|O|L|A|I|D|R|E|
|E|N|O|R|O|T|I|N|O|M|E|X|T|E|N|S|I|O|N|
|P|B|Y|F|S|N|M|E|D|R|A|C|D|N|U|O|S|T|I|
|T|N|E|M|U|C|O|D|O|A|N|E|T|W|O|R|K|E|C|
|H|G|A|I|E|R|S|O|U|D|T|N|I|H|A|L|Y|R|V|

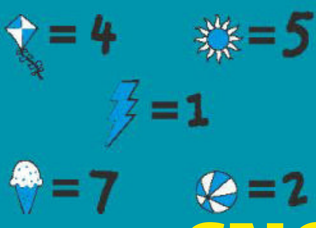
## KILLER SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|6|3|1|4|2|5|9|8|7|
|2|9|5|7|6|8|1|4|3|
|7|4|8|1|9|3|2|6|5|
|3|2|4|6|7|1|8|5|9|
|5|1|9|2|8|4|3|7|6|
|8|6|7|3|5|9|4|2|1|
|9|5|2|8|1|7|6|3|4|
|1|8|3|5|4|6|7|9|2|
|4|7|6|9|3|2|5|1|8|

## GUESS THE MOVIE

**A** Once Upon a Time… in Hollywood
**B** Midsommar

## TOTAL-LY PUZZLED



## CRISS CROSS

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | |C|O|A|S|T|G|U|A|R|D| | | |
|F|E|R|R|I|S|W|H|E|E|L| | |H| | | |R| |R|O|C|K|
|R| | |O| |H| |A| | |I| |P|I|C|N|I|C| |I| |H| |
|I|C|E|C|R|E|A|M| | |F| | |N| | | |A| |F| |I| |
|S| | |K| |L| |P| | |F|L|A|G|S| | |D| |T| |L| |
|B| | |P| |L| |E| | | | | |L| |S| |E| |W| |D| |
|E| | |O| | |C|R|A|B| | |B|E|A|C|H| | |O| |R| |
|E| | |O| | |H| |N| |S|E|A| | |A| | |H|O|T|E|L|
| |L|I|L|O| |I| |G| |A| |L| | |L| |B| |D| |N| |
| |I| | | | |P| |L| |N| |L| | |L| |R| | | | | |
| |F|E|R|R|Y| | |E| |D| | |P|R|O|M|E|N|A|D|E| |
| |E| | | | |S|U|R|F| |K| |A| |P| |A| | |E| |B|
| |B| |W|A|V|E| | | | |I| |D| |S| |K| | |C| |L|
| |E| |I| | |A| |L|O|W|T|I|D|E| | |E| | |K| |A|
| |L| |N| | |F| |I| | |E| |L| |S| |R| | |C| |N|
| |T| |K| |T|R|U|N|K|S| | |E| |P| | | | |H| |K|
| | | |L| | |O| |E| | |S|U|R|F|E|R| |S|P|A|D|E|
|T|O|W|E|L| |N| |R| | |E| |S| |E| | |A| |I| |T|
|I| | | |I| |T| | | |B|A|Y| | |D| | |N| |R| | |
|D| | | |M| | | |F| | |G| | | |B| | |D| | | | |
|E| | | |P| |S|W|I|M|S|U|I|T| |O| |M|A|R|I|N|A|
| | | | |E| |U| |S| | |L| | | |A| | |L| | | | |
|Y|A|C|H|T| |N| |H| | |L| | | |T| | |S| | | | |

## SKELETON

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|R|U|B|B|E|R|■|F|A|T|H|O|M|
|E|■|U|■|V|■|■|■|J|■|U|■|E|
|C|O|R|N|E|R|■|F|A|R|M|E|R|
|I|■|R|■|N|E|V|E|R|■|O|■|E|
|P|O|O|R|■|A|■|R|■|D|U|E|L|
|E|■|W|I|L|L|P|O|W|E|R|■|Y|
|■|■|■|F|■|I|■|C|■|C|■|■|■|
|P|■|C|L|A|S|S|I|C|A|L|■|P|
|R|A|R|E|■|T|■|O|■|Y|E|A|R|
|O|■|I|■|M|I|N|U|S|■|G|■|A|
|M|O|S|A|I|C|■|S|A|F|E|T|Y|
|P|■|I|■|L|■|■|■|G|■|N|■|E|
|T|U|S|S|L|E|■|R|E|A|D|E|R|

## CONNECT 4

Ghosts

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

## SMART METER

**1** Order of the planets in our solar system, **2** JD Vance, **3** The Final Reckoning, **4** Mount Elbrus, **5** Star Trek, **6** Clavicle, **7** Alice Sebold, **8** Brown Girl In The Ring, **9** Thames, **10** Gary Oldman, **11** Orinoco, **12** 1940s, **13** Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin, **14** Barrel, **15** Beatles, **16** New York City, **17** Stockholm, **18** Jordan North, **19** Wellington, **20** Karl Marx.

## MISSING LINKS

**Across 1** Shadow, **5** Closed, **10** Order, **11** Ice, **12** Extra, **13** Tied, **14** Stand, **15** Free, **18** Machine, **20** Railway, **22** Cabinet, **24** Plastic, **26** Lime, **28** Drive, **29** Tree, **33** After, **34** War, **35** Under, **36** Flower, **37** Yellow.
**Down 2** Hedge, **3** Dark, **4** Whistle, **5** Cleaner, **6** Open, **7** Eater, **8** Bottom, **9** Safety, **16** Giant, **17** Final, **19** Cub, **21** Wet, **22** Collar, **23** Thrower, **24** Poverty, **25** Cherry, **27** Metal, **30** Radio, **31** Crew, **32** Full.

## CUNNING CONUNDRUM

Nutrition

## STARSCOPE

**1** Shower, **2** Quiver, **3** Pretty, **4** Stage, **5** Misty, **6** Bruise, **7** Tiny, **8** Wheat, **9** Station, **10** Fish, **11** Moles, **12** Gok, **13** Alone, **14** Hay.
**Mystery celebrity** Harry Styles
**Message** This is a great time to ask a very important question. Why be shy? Let your feelings show!

Pictures Shutterstock

**QUEEN CAMILLA**
The Queen, 77, usually graces flower lovers with her presence at the RHS sponsored event every year – and her outfits are very on-theme!

**AINSLEY HARRIOTT**
The 68-year-old *Ready, Steady, Cook* star was all smiles when he spotted these Prince of Darkness peonies.

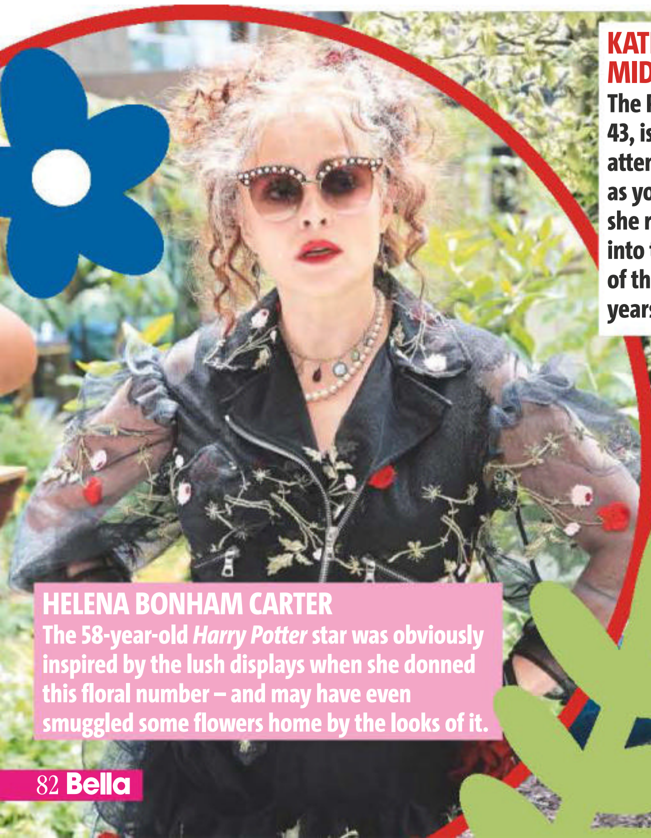
**INDIRA VARMA**
If rain ever threatens the Chelsea Flower Show, acclaimed actor Indira, 51, should be kept safe with her makeshift brolly.

# CHELSEA FLOWER FANS

These celebs love the annual horticulture show, which starts on 20 May

**MONTY DON AND JOE SWIFT**
Don't be fooled by their disguises; Monty, 69, and Joe, 59, are regular fixtures at the show and have been involved in coverage of the event for years.

**KATE MIDDLETON**
The Princess, 43, is a regular attendee, and as you can see she really got into the swing of things a few years ago.



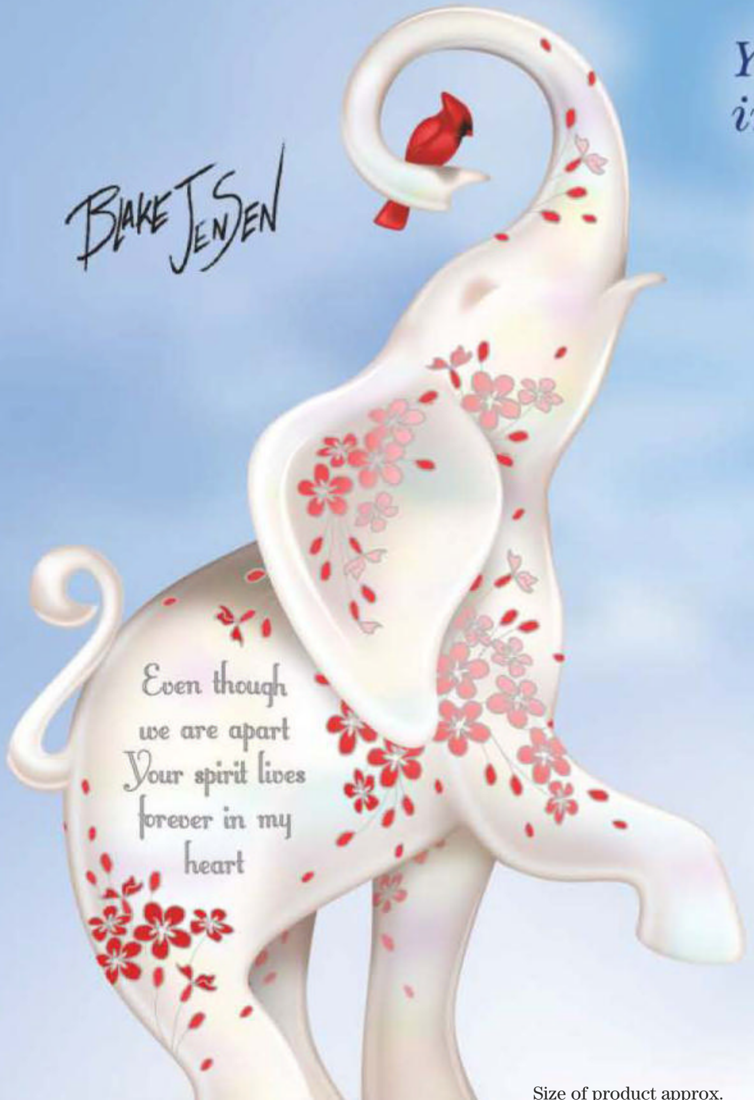
**HELENA BONHAM CARTER**
The 58-year-old *Harry Potter* star was obviously inspired by the lush displays when she donned this floral number – and may have even smuggled some flowers home by the looks of it.

**JOANNA LUMLEY**
The effortlessly chic 79-year-old actor had an absolutely fabulous time, of course.

By Sarah O'Byrne, **Pictures** Getty, shutterstock

Blake Jensen

# Your spirit lives forever in my *heart.*



Size of product approx.
6 inches (15.2 cm) high.

**Handcrafted and hand-painted**

•

**Hand-numbered limited edition**

•

**Certificate of Authenticity included**

***Cheerful cardinal shares a 'hello' from Heaven and lets you know your loved one is safe and happy.***

## Visiting cardinal brings love and comfort.

Even the never-forgetful elephant needs a gentle reminder sometimes. And that's just what this colourful cardinal has come to do! Perched high upon the elephant's trunk for a 'bird's-eye' view, it sings sweet praise for a much-missed loved one ... and reminds its pachyderm pal that a loved one is never truly gone, as long as their memory lives on.

### *Crafted and painted by hand*

Artist Blake Jensen's **'Forever In My Heart'** figurine is tenderly handcrafted and handpainted. From the elephant's **pearlescent, soft-white finish** adorned with **hand-applied colourful florals** and a **comforting sentiment** to the **etched 'feathery' details** of its precious winged friend, nothing is left to chance.

### *Not available on the high street*

Available only from The Bradford Exchange and limited to just 95 casting days, **'Forever In Your Heart'** is hand-numbered and includes a Certificate of Authenticity. **Plus, your satisfaction is guaranteed for one full year or your money back.** It's great value at just £49.98, (plus £6.99 S&S)*. To order yours, you need pay nothing now, simply complete and return your Priority Order Form today!

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## FASTEST WAY TO ORDER

**www.bradford.co.uk/elephantcardinalfigurinebge**

***Or call on* 0333 003 0019**

*Lines are open: Mon-Thurs 10-6 Fri 9-5 Sat 9-4*

***and quote reference code 464789***

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**Please Respond Promptly**

**To: The Bradford Exchange, PO Box 653, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 4RA**

**YES!** Please order __ (Qty) of the **'Forever In My Heart' Elephant Figurine** for me as described in this advertisement.

**Complete today or Call 0333 003 0019**

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